Catholicism:

Or, Several

ENQUIRIES

TOUCHING

Visible Church-membership,
Church-Communion,
The Nature of Schism;

And the Usefulness of

National Constitutions

For the furtherance of

RELIGION.

By *W. A.*

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

ONE *would think any thing ſhould be acceptable to diſſenting Brethren, which has a true tendency to deliver them from thoſe miſtaken notions of things which do expoſe them to much trouble from* Men, *and from the* Laws *themſelves, and by means of which they are an occaſion of trouble and danger to the Nation. And it is but reaſonable to expect*

that things of this nature ſhould be conſider'd by them now at ſuch a time as this, tho' neglected during the time in which thoſe Opinions put them to no trouble. The hope of which and the ſorrow to ſee Chriſtian Brethren to ſuffer great inconveniencies to themſelves needleſly, has been a motive to me to make theſe ſheets publick at this time; as not doubting but that if judiciouſly and impartially weighed, they with other writings of like nature, may be of good uſe to diſcover to them their miſtakes.

Their Separation from parochial Communion which does expoſe them to trouble, does proceed principally from their miſtakes (as I conceive them to be) either about that

that which makes men members of the visible Church, or that which gives them Right to the external Priviledges thereof, or about the external manner of publick worship. There are many of the Dissenters whose notion of the visible Church, and of Mens Right to Communion in the external Priviledge of it, seems much narrower than the Scriptures represent those things to be. They make that to be necessary to visible *Church-member-ship and Communion, which is but necessary to* Invisible *Church-Communion. And then they make this qualification necessary not only by way of* Duty, *but of* Condition *also, without which in humane judgement persons ought not to be admitted into*

Church fellowſhip, or unto Communion in the external priviledges of the Church. Which notion and correſpondent practice of theirs, I have endeavored to diſcover to be plainly contrary to the whole current of the Scriptures touching theſe matters, both of the Old Teſtament and of the New, both as to doctrine and matters of fact.

That which hath betrayed them into this miſtake, ſeems to have been the want of diſtinguiſhing between the internal and external ſtate of the Church; for want of which they confound them, and make that which is but neceſſary to the Being of the Church as inviſible, to be ſo likewiſe to the Being of it as it is viſible. The

Church

Church being described in Scripture but as a little flock, and that as our Saviour says there are but few which find the narrow way which leads to Life, and enter in at the strait gate; and because the qualification of those of the invisible Church who shall be saved, as described in Scripture, seems to agree but to a few of those who profess the Christian Religion; and because the Church is but One; *hereupon they come to be perswaded that none are really and truly of the Church but such whose qualification agrees with their description to whom Salvation is indeed promised. But as for others they esteem them no more to be true and real Members of the Church,*

than wooden Legs and glaſs Eyes are Members of the Body of a Man.

But then there are Scriptures which muſt be conſidered likewiſe which have foretold of the coming of many whole Nations into the Church both Kings and their People, and of the numerous increaſe of it, when a little one ſhall become a thouſand, and a ſmall one a ſtrong Nation: when the ſtone cut out of the mountain without hands ſhall fill the wole Earth, *when for number* they ſhall ſay the place is too ſtrait for me: give place to me that I may dwell, *and the like; for there are many ſuch Predictions in Scripture. Now unleſs they will ſay that whole*

whole Nations and those vast numbers forementioned, are all of the Church as invisible (which is more then they will or can say) they must of necessity admit of a distinction of a two-fold state of one and the same Catholick Church, the one external and visible, the other internal and invisible. And if this distinction be admitted, then these Predictions concerning the vast extent of the Church, will be fairly reconcileable to those other Scriptures which speak of it in a more contracted and limited sense; without which they seem irreconcileable. For what some Scriptures speak touching the paucity or fewness of Church-members, and what others say touching a far greater number,

of

of which the Church doth and will consist, are both true in different respects; the one in respect of the Internal and Invisible state of the Church; the other in respect of that which is external and visible. And this distinction is fairly justified by what our blessed Saviour hath said more than once, to wit, that many are called, but few are chosen.

And if any should fancie that this twofold state of Church-members implies two Churches, the one visible, the other invisible; there is no ground for it, since those who are of the Church as invisible, are the same Persons which are in external and visible Union and Communion with those who are of the Church only as visible,

ſible, and ſo make one Church with them. But we cannot ſay they make one Church with theſe, and another by themſelves, for then there would be two Churches indeed, and yet of the ſame perſons for a conſiderable part.

Conſidering then this twofold ſtate of the Church, it will not be difficult at all to conceive how and why a participation in the external privileges of the Church, does belong to all that are externally and viſibly of it, when yet a participation in the internal and inviſible privileges of it, belongs only to thoſe who are of the Church in reſpect of its inviſible as well as viſible ſtate. As there are different qualifications of perſons of the ſame Church, ſo there are

different

different priviledges which belong to them accordingly; external ones to them who are only externally qualified, and both external and internal ones to them who are qualified for both.

Now this different ſtate of the Church being ſo apparent as it is in Scripture; as alſo that thoſe who have but common grace and yet Baptized, are really and truly of the viſible Church: I ſay the conſideration of theſe things hath enclined me to touch upon ſeveral things which ſeem to render it very improbable at leaſt, that the Apoſtles ſhould admit none into the Church by Baptiſm, but ſuch as they judged to believe ſo effectually, as to be thereby Regenerate before they would Baptize them.

To

To what is ſaid in my inquiries into theſe matters, I ſhall here add a little more for our better Underſtanding that caſe or queſtion.

The queſtion is whether it be probable that the Apoſtles admitted none into the Church by Baptiſm, but upon Suppoſition that they had a true juſtifying ſaving faith before ſuch admiſſion. And hereby faith in this queſtion is not meant faith objectively, but ſubjectively conſidered. For it is agreed that a profeſſion of a belief of the ſame truth doctrinally conſidered, is neceſſary to viſible Church-membership by Baptiſm in the adult, which if believed as it ought to be; will be ſufficient unto Juſtification and

Salva-

Salvation: and such is the Belief That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, *John* 20. 31. *Acts* 8. 37. *But the question is whether a less degree of belief of saving doctrine be not sufficient to visible Church-membership, than is sufficient unto Justification and Salvation? and whether it is not probable that the Apostles did admit some into the Church by Baptism upon the appearance and probable evidence of such a Faith? And in order to the making a due judgement in this case, it is necessary to know what this Faith is, and wherein it differs from justifying and saving Faith. The one for distinction sake we call a Faith* initial *or* inchoate, *the other a Faith* consummate *or complete.*

The

The initial Faith ſtands in ſuch a lower degree of aſſent of the mind unto the Truth of the Goſpel concerning Chriſt his being the Son of God or Saviour of Sinners, as has not yet thorow its power over the Will, renewed the whole man ſo as to become Regenerate or a new creature. But the Faith conſummate or complete lies in ſuch a firm aſſent of the mind unto the Truth of the Goſpel, as by which through frequent conſideration of the things aſſented to, the Will is changed and renewed in its inclinations, motions and affections, in reference both to Sin and Duty.

This difference between Faith and Faith is fairly ſet out in the Scriptures. St. James, *chap.* 2.

treats

treats of a Faith that will not avail to Justification and Salvation, and of that also which will. The one is the Faith which is alone or by it self, *verse* 15. *which has not yet purified the heart from earthly affections, and fleshly lusts, nor brought forth the fruit of the Spirit, but is dead, and remains barren. But the other Faith which will avail to Justification, is operative and vigorous, producing internal and external acts of Christian Obedience, by which its made perfect, ver.* 22. *that is, it is thereby made to attain its end in the Justification of the person that hath it. This Faith worketh by Love, and is thereby consummate or made perfect.* Gal. 5. *For the* Greek *word according*

according to learned Authors, is in the middle voice, and may be taken actively or passively, or rather both, it working by Love, is thereby consummate or made perfect. Dr. Hammond *understands it in a passive sence, and reads it thus,* Faith which is consummate by Love. *When St.* Paul *saith,* I could not write to you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ, *because of the envy, strife and division they lived in,* 1 Cor. 3. 1. *his words seem to intimate that men might be babes in Christ by such a Faith as fell short of purifying the heart, and working by love, and which left them in a carnal state. And when S.* Peter *saith,* Add to your Faith Vir-

tue, &c. 2 Pet. 1. 5. *he ſuppoſeth it very poſſible for ſome Chriſtians to have a faith without the addition of thoſe Chriſtian virtues there enumerated, and to* be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt, as it follows* Verſ. 8, 9. *And we read of ſome who believed in Chriſt when they ſaw his Miracles, to whom yet he would not commit himſelf,* Joh. 2. 23. *and of others who believed on him, but would not confeſs him, leſt they ſhould be put out of the Synagogue, and becauſe they loved the praiſe of men more than the praiſe of God.* John 12. 42. *And its ſaid of* Magus *that* Simon *himſelf alſo believed,* Act. 8. 13.

This

This may ſuffice to ſhew what that Faith is which falls ſhort of that which is Juſtifying, and wherein it differs from it. I ſhall now improve this to ſhew how unlikely a thing it is, that the Apoſtles ſhould receive none into the Church by Baptiſm but ſuch as they eſteem'd to have a Juſtifying Faith.

1. *It is no ways probable that thoſe who had lived in the darkneſs of Paganiſm, ſhould ordinarily if at all, in their firſt beginning to believe, believe unto Juſtification, but that there was ſome ſpace of time between their firſt believing, and their believing unto Juſtification: and if ſo, then it cannot be probable that the Apoſtles who Baptiſed men*

presently and when they first began to believe, would Baptize them under the notion of their having already believed unto Justification. Now the reason why it is not probable that such men when they first began to believe, did then believe unto Justification is this; because men do not believe unto Justification untill their Faith hath wrought such a change in the whole man as by which they become Regenerate, as I have shew'd: for we cannot say God justifies unregenerate men while they are such. Now such a change as this, is not ordinarily if at all, wrought in an instant and as soon as men begin to believe. For the word of God by believing of which this change is

wrought,

wrought, does not effect it phyſically, but morally, by cauſing ſuch thoughts and conſiderations to riſe in the mind, as do by degrees alter and change the moral frame and conſtitution of the Soul. For tho' the Spirit of God is the principal Agent, and the word of God his Inſtrument in this work, yet he cauſeth this change by working upon mens thoughts, and by bringing them ſeriouſly to conſider the things they believe, whereunto they tend, and how they were concern'd in them. And mens diſcerning things of this nature, and conſequently their thoughts and conſiderations about them are brought on but by degrees, as light comes in, being confuſedly and indiſtinctly diſcerned at firſt.

And the aſſent of the mind to the truth of things to be believed, cannot exceed the minds diſcerning the credibility of the evidence upon which they are to be believed, but ſo long as the one is weak the other will be weak alſo. And ſo far as the aſſent of the mind is but weak, ſo far its operation upon the will to alter and change it, will be but weak likewiſe; as the one is wrought gradually, ſo is the other. Men may be forced to believe whether they will or no thro' the ſtrength of conviction, as that ſignifies the aſſent of the mind, when yet the will is not thereby prevailed upon to conſent and yield to the dictates of the mind, for ſome conſiderable time, and ſometimes never. And

let

let a mans faith or belief be what it will, yet untill it prevails over the will (which is the great wheel in the Soul, that gives motion both to a mans affections and actions) to alter and change it as to its prevailing bent and inclination, its far enough from putting a man into a justified state. And when ever the will is brought to comply with the assent and judgement of the mind in this great matter, yet it is then ordinarily a work of time and the fruit of many thoughts and considerations: for want of which tho' men do believe, their Faith will languish and bring forth no fruit to perfection, as we are taught in the Parable by the seed which did so for want of much Earth, which

anſwers to the want of many thoughts and conſiderations.

All theſe things conſider'd then, that ſince a Faith which hath not Regenerated thoſe in whom it is, falls ſhort of a Juſtifying Faith; and ſince Faith in its beginning and loweſt pitch is ordinarily ſo weak and inoperative to effect ſo great a change as Regeneration ſignifies, untill by many thoughts and conſiderations it has gathered ſome ſtrength; and ſince for it to do ſo is a work of time; and ſince the Apoſtles from whoſe writings theſe things are collected, baptiſed thoſe upon their firſt believing or beginning to believe, who had untill then lived in the darkneſs of Paganiſm; I ſay theſe things conſidered, make it very improbable

bable that the Apoſtles Baptiſed none but upon ſuppoſition and probable preſumption that they all had a juſtifying Faith before they Baptiſed them.

If any ſhall ſay it was upon a charitable perſwaſion in the Apoſtles that thoſe whom they Baptiſed had ſuch a Faith as by which they either were already regenerated and juſtified, or would be in time, that they Baptiſed them, I ſhall not oppoſe them herein. But the ſaying thus does ſuppoſe and grant that the Apoſtles did not account ſuch a Faith as by which men were already before Baptiſm regenerate and juſtified, neceſſary to qualifie them for Baptiſm, if they had but ſuch a Faith which gave them

ground

ground to hope that it might in time be improved ſo as to become a juſtifying Faith; which conceſſion is every whit as much as I plead for.

2. *It is not probable that the Apoſtles received none into the viſible Church by Baptiſm, but ſuch as they eſteemed to be of the Church as inviſible by a Juſtifying Faith, becauſe they could not but know that many are really and truly of the viſible Church, and are ſo eſteemed by God, who yet are not of the Church as inviſible by ſuch a Faith. That ſuch are of the viſible Church in the account of the Scriptures, both of the Old Teſtament and of the New, I have I ſuppoſe ſufficiently proved in ſome of the fol-*

following Enquiries. And if this was and is the currant doctrine of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament and of thoſe written by the Apoſtles, we cannot ſuppoſe them to be ignorant of it: And if they were not, it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe they would reckon more neceſſary to qualifie men for their enterance into the viſible Church, than was neceſſary to their being of it.

3. *The Apoſtles had Commiſſion to Baptiſe Diſciples and Believers without limitation or exception; and thoſe who had but the initial Faith which I before deſcribed, are in Scripture ſaid to have believed and to have been diſciples, as is ſhew'd in the following Papers; and therefore the*

the Apoſtles Commiſſion to Baptiſe, muſt needs extend to the Baptiſing of ſuch. And it is no ways likely that the Apoſtles would make exception in reference to the Baptiſing of perſons, where their Commiſſion made none, but that they Baptiſed all that were at all diſciples as ſuch, without diſcrimination or making a difference between believers and believers, or diſciples and diſciples, in reference to their Baptiſing of ſuch: Nor does it all appear by any the leaſt hint in Scripture that they did. Indeed our Saviour in Commiſſionating his Apoſtles, ſeems to make a difference between teaching men ſo as to make them diſciples capable of Baptiſm, and the teaching them

after-

afterwards how to live a truly Christian Life: he seems to have directed them to bring them first to believe Christ to be the Son of God, the Messiah, the Saviour, the great Prophet that brought to men the way of Salvation, and to engage them to become disciples unto him and his Religion, and to baptize them into it; and then afterwards to instruct them in the particulars of their duty: And this the double teaching mentioned in their Commission, Mat. 28.19,20. *seems to imply, and their baptising men so suddenly and upon so little Teaching as they did, does likewise infer.*

I have also given same account in the Tenth Enquiry, how agreeable it is to the Wisdom and Goodness

ueſs of God towards men in ſeveral reſpects, to admit ſuch as have but common grace, into the Church as viſible: and if it be ſo, then they act croſs to Gods gracious deſign who labour to keep them out of it.

Another miſtake upon which Separation from parochial Communion is founded, is an opinion that our bleſſed Saviour has been more particular then indeed he has, in determining the external manner and circumſtances of Gods publick worſhip.

For the promoters of Separation were wont heretofore to ſuggeſt to us from thoſe words concerning Chriſt, Heb. 3. 2. That he was faithful to him that appointed him, as *Moſes* was faithful

faithful in all his Houſe. *That Chriſt had given direction in particular about the worſhip of God, and the orders to be obſerved in his Houſe now under the Goſpel, as* Moſes *had done under the Law. And accordingly they often urged that care ſhould be taken, that all things be done according to the Pattern in the Mount. By which many people became diſaffected to the worſhip of God by the uſe of a Liturgy, in as much as they could not find our Saviour to have given any precept or direction for the worſhiping God in ſuch a way, or after ſuch manner.*

Whereas the faithfulneſs of Chriſt to him that had appointed him, did not ſtand in being as par-

particular as Moſes *was in his directions touching the worſhip of God, and orders of his Houſe, but in doing and teaching ſo much and all that the Father had appointed him, as* Moſes *alſo had done. And ſince we find that our Saviour has not been ſo particular in his directions touching theſe matters as Moſes was, we thereby know that the Father did not appoint him to be ſo, becauſe he was faithful in obſerving all that was appointed him. Now that our Saviour has not been ſo particular in his directions touching the external manner of Gods worſhip as* Moſes *was, will quickly appear if we do but compare what was done by him in this kind, and what was done by*

Moſe

Moſes. *Under the Law God did not only preſcribe the matter and ſubſtance of his worſhip, as the ſeveral ſorts of Sacrifices and Oblations; but alſo the particular circumſtances relating to them, as the place where the Sacrifice ſhould be killed, and on which ſide the Altar, and how it ſhould be dreſſed, and about the Fire of the Altar, and the orderly laying of the Wood upon it, and how the Parts of the Sacrifice ſhould be laid upon the Wood. And beſides all this, there were Laws directing how the Prieſts ſhould be Accoutred in their Miniſtration, as of what, and after what manner and faſhion their Garments ſhould be made, and when put on, and when put off. And I*

might instance in many like things in other cases.

But now in the New Testament *it is far otherwise; There we are directed indeed in the Substance and Spiritual Nature of Divine Worship, and what is essential to it: But as for the External circumstances of Administration thereof, we have very little of particular direction therein; but the Church in those things is left for the most part, to guide and determin her self and her own actions by general Rules, such as Edification, Peace and Order, and such External signs of Reverence and Devotion, as Natural Religion will direct men in. And indeed there is so little of particular direction in these things,*

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as that there is no ſort of Chriſtians however diſtinguiſhed, but do more, and are under a neceſſity of doing more in the External manner of Worſhip, than there is particular direction for in Scripture.

There is a command for Baptiſing Diſciples in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt: but no particular direction what Prayer ſhall be made, or what Inſtruction ſhall be given at the Adminiſtration of Baptiſm, nor after what manner or form the Party Baptiſed ſhall by himſelf or Parents, enter into Covenant with God. The like may be ſaid touching the Lords Supper: there is no particular direction what Prayers ſhall be made, or Inſtru-

ction given, or Exhortation made at the Adminiſtration of it, nor after what manner the Elements are to be Conſecrated, otherwiſe than by reciting the words of Inſtitution; nor how in particular the Cup is to be Bleſſed, nor what Geſture ſhall be uſed, nor when and how often it ſhall be Received. In theſe things Churches in ſeveral Nations may and do vary more or leſs, and yet all is well done ſo long as they keep to general Rule, which may be obſerved and kept to in theſe and other Ordinances of Worſhip under ſeveral different Circumſtances; and this none can deny.

And ſo far publick Prayer, tho' we have particular Rules for the matter of it, and to whom and

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in whoſe Name to be made, and likewiſe for the Internal manner: yet as to the External manner and circumſtances (ſave that of being made in a known Tongue) as whether it ſhall be made in a ſet Form or without (except the direction given for the uſe of the Lords Prayer,) or whether with the uſe of a Book or without it, or whether kneeling or ſtanding, or how many ſhall be made at one Church Aſſembly; theſe things are not particularly determined one way or other, but are left to the prudence of men to uſe one or another, according as the exigence of Circumſtances ſhall require, or their Governors order.

And if our Bleſſed Saviour had not intended to have allowed

ſuch a liberty in the choice of External Circumſtances of Worſhip; we cannot in reaſon but think he would have been as particular in determining them, as he has been in the matter and ſubſtance of Worſhip it ſelf, which yet we ſee he has not been. For he could not but know it impoſſible for all Church Guides not immediately inſpired (tho' otherwiſe never ſo wiſe and good) to pitch upon the ſelf-ſame Circumſtances of Adminiſtration, where they have only general Rules to Guide them in their Choice. And accordingly experience ſhews that among good men, ſome have thought ſuch and ſuch Circumſtances of Worſhip beſt to agree with general Rules, when others as good as they have thought

thought others to do ſo. And tho' in ſuch caſes both cannot be beſt under the ſame Circumſtances of things, yet that which is not beſt in it ſelf may be beſt to be uſed as Circumſtances may fall out, as when that which is not beſt cannot be refuſed without a greater inconvenience than the uſe of that rather than a better does amount to.

Our Bleſſed Saviour then having left his People at ſo much liberty in the choice of External Circumſtances of Worſhip as we ſee he has, it argues ſufficiently that the uſe of different Circumſtantial modes of Worſhip is not at all diſpleaſing unto him, ſo long as they agree with the general Rule, eſpecially when the avoiding of a

Breach, and the preſervation of Peace, Unity, and good Will in the Church, does' influence the choice.

If there be then ſuch a liberty left by Chriſt unto his Church of uſing different Circumſtantial modes of Worſhip, ſo long as they anſwer to the general Rule, as none can with any colour of reaſon deny but there is; then it cannot but be a great abuſe of this liberty, for Chriſtians ſo to contend for one of theſe Circumſtantial modes of Worſhip, in oppoſition to the other, as to ſeparate and break Communion about it, and thereby to involve the Church in unpeaceable ſtrife and contention, diſaffection and feuds. When it is but matter of liberty to uſe one or another,

another, and not matter of indiſpenſable Duty to uſe one only and not the other; it cannot but be an abuſe of ſuch a liberty to make uſe of it to a publick hurt to the Church. The making uſe of that which is but only matter of liberty, when to do ſo cauſeth a Brother to offend, is ſeverely condemned by St. Paul; *how much more then is the making uſe of ſuch liberty to be blamed when it tends to a great and publick miſchief in the Church? St.* Paul *ſaith*, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, onely *uſe* not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but by love ſerve one another, *Gal.* 5. 13. *That the uſing of this liberty we ſpeak of has been an occaſion for the fleſh to ſhow*

it

it ſelf and play its part, is ſadly viſible in that variance, ſtrife, emulation *and* envying, *which has been cauſed thereby; which are* works of the fleſh, *and ſuch too that as St.* Paul *ſaith,* they which do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God, *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21.

I know it will be ſaid, that if it be an abuſe of liberty to contend ſo much for the uſe of one External way and manner of Worſhip, when another is Lawful as well as that, and when to do ſo tends to ſtrife and diviſion, and the deſtruction of Charity; then it muſt be alike abuſe of liberty to impoſe the uſe of another, when ſuch an impoſition is attended with the ſame, or like evil or inconve-

convenience, as we ſee the impoſition of that preſcribed by the Liturgy is. To this I ſhall ſay but theſe two things.

1. *If we ſhould ſuppoſe this to be ſo as they object; yet the abuſe of a liberty one way by the Authors of ſuch an impoſition, does not at all priviledge the abuſe of a liberty by others in the contrary extream.*

2. *The impoſition they ſpeak of is no neceſſary* Cauſe *of diviſion and ſeparation, or of the ill effect of them; and if it ſhould be any* occaſion *of them, yet there is a vaſt difference between the being an accidental occaſion of diviſion, and actually to divide and ſeparate cauſleſly. And look how much the one is worſe than the other,*

other, by ſo much muſt the Diſſenters be more in fault by their actual diviſion and ſeparation, than they can with any appearance of reaſon pretend the other to be, for the ſeverity of their impoſition.

Now that the impoſition of the Liturgy is no neceſſary cauſe of diviſion and ſeparation, will appear in that the defects objected againſt it, are no ſufficient cauſe of ſeparation from the Worſhip performed according to it: and this I hope I have made out to the ſatisfaction of any Man whoſe prejudice is not greater than his reaſon, in my inquiring into the nature of Schiſm among the following diſcourſes. In which diſcourſes I have endeavoured to remove thoſe bars and ſtumbling-blocks out of the

Diſ-

Diſſenters *way, which have kept them from Communion with our Parochial Congregations*; *and this with a deſign of eaſe to them as well as ſervice to the Church otherways.*

But this their narrowing and leſſening the extent of the viſible Church, and the terms of admiſſion into it, and of ſharing in the External priviledges of it; *and likewiſe their confining the Adminiſtration of its Worſhip to one Circumſtantial mode as only Lawful, when Almighty God has not done ſo, is of very pernicious conſequence. For it has we ſee divided the Proteſtants among themſelves, and caſt them into Parties*; *and then engaged them in contentious Diſputes one againſt another,*

another, which has begot a kind of ſtrangeneſs and ſhineſs in them towards each other, yea and diſaffection too; and the oppoſition begot upon this account riſes ſtill higher and higher, and more and more threatens ruine to both Parties, firſt and laſt. And the Papiſts themſelves could never have contrived a more likely way to diſgrace the Reformation, to lay low the Proteſtant intereſt, to enfeeble its ſtrength, and to break down its fence, and make way for the return of Popery, than we our ſelves have taken by dividing our ſelves by needleſs and unreaſonable ſcruples, and by making a Reformation of the Reformation as neceſſary as the firſt Reformation from Popery was, and for want

want of it, to make a ſecond ſeparation as neceſſary as the firſt: For what would or could they do more than ſeparate, in caſe Popery were in place of Proteſtant Worſhip? And however an emendation in ſome things of an Eccleſiaſtical concern may be very convenient and deſirablee when it can be had in a Legal *way; yet to make this as neceſſary as the firſt Reformation from Popery was, and a ſeparation from Parochial Communion for want of it, as neceſſary as our firſt ſeparation from Popery was, is ſo unreaſonble, that it is a marvelous thing that men of any reputation for Wiſdom ſhould not ſee it, and be full of the ſenſe of it. And ſo it is likewiſe that they ſhould run*

ſo

ſo deſparate a hazzard as they do, of loſing all the benefit they have of the National Reformation from Popery, rather than be denied or want that further Reformation as they eſteem it, which they deſire: And is it not marvelous alſo that they will not do what they can do toward preventing of it, by complying with publick Order as far as they can? For they themſelves have given occaſion to believe that very many, eſpecially of the more knowing of them, can joyn in the Common Prayers *made in our Parochial Aſſemblies, yea and more than ſo; however it comes to paſs they refrain from doing ſo. And one would think the Apoſtles injunction*; if it be doſſible, and as much as in you

you lies live peaceably with all men, *ſhould weigh more with them than any politick conſideration whatſoever; eſpecially when the Publick Peace and Safety is ſo much concerned in it as it is, and as they know it is. It is hardly to be believed that they can think that not to comply as far as they can, ſhould be a more likely way to come into their End, ſo far as it is fair and reaſonable, than to do ſo is. God Almighty grant the things which belong to our Peace, may not ſtill be hid from our Eyes.*

I have been informed and do perceive that many of the Diſſenters can come to Church, but can-

not kneel in receiving the Sacrament; by reaſon whereof they are obnoxious to the Law, tho' they ſhould come to Church. For whoſe help and ſatisfaction in this Caſe I ſhall here add a few words which were omitted in a more proper place. One reaſon of this ſcruple of theirs is taken from our Saviour and his Apoſtles uſing another geſture at the firſt Inſtitution of the Lords Supper; But it muſt be conſidered,

1. *That if the circumſtances attending the firſt Inſtitution of this Supper ſhould oblige us to an imitation of them as well as in what is Eſſential to the Ordinance it ſelf, then we may not receive it but in the Night, and after another Supper is firſt eaten,*

eaten, and in the Geſture and Poſture of lying upon Couches or Beds: for under thoſe Circumſtances it was firſt inſtituted and received. But now the different Practice of Chriſtians in after times does declare, That they have not held themſelves obliged to imitate them in theſe Circumſtances. Nor is there any reaſon they ſhould; becauſe theſe things were but accidental to the Ordinance it ſelf, and were all occaſioned by this Supper, being inſtituted at the Paſchal Supper, and from the Jews *Geſture uſed therein according to the Cuſtome of their Countrey. And the alteration of the Geſture does no more alter the Nature of the Ordinance; than the alteration of the other*

Accidental Circumſtances does.

2. *Scripture Examples are no farther binding to us than they were agreeable to ſome Precept or Rule of Duty otherwiſe. But now there is no Precept enjoyning any one Geſture to be uſed in receiving the Sacrament, as excluſive of any other, and therefore any may be made uſe of when required by the Government over us: for where there is no Law, there is no Tranſgreſſion.*

But if there had been any one Geſture required by our Saviour as neceſſary and as excluſive of others, no doubt but St. Paul *would have made mention of it when he made known to the Church of* Corinth *what he had received from the Lord touching his*

his Laſt Supper; but we ſee no ſuch thing was mentioned by him. Chap. 11.

3. *The* Jewiſh *Church having altered the Geſture in their eating the Paſſeover from what was uſed at the firſt inſtitution of it; our Saviour we ſee complyed there with and conformed to what was then become Cuſtomary in that Church: And if we do the like for the like reaſon, who can blame us for it without reproaching our Bleſſed Saviour.*

Their other reaſon of their Scruple, is taken from the Papiſts having abuſed this Geſture of kneeling to Idolatry in worſhipping the Bread by it? for which cauſe they ſay we ſhould not uſe it in receiving the Sacrament, leaſt we

ſeem to ſympolize with them therein. In Anſwer to this, ſeveral things are to be conſidered. As

1. *That tho' the Church of* Rome *doth ſtrictly enjoyn kneeling at the Elevation of the Hoſt, yet in the Act of Receiving it is not required by any Cannon or Conſtitution of theirs. Dr.* John Burges, *of great Note in his time, in his Treatiſe touching the Lawfulneſs of receiving the Sacrament kneeling, or in his Defence of the three Innocent Ceremonies, Chap.* 21. *pag.* 67. *and pag.* 479. *of his Rejoynder, as he is recited (for I have not his Book) hath theſe words.* With us the Biſhops or Miniſters Communicate kneeling, as well as the People: But with the Papiſts,

Papiſts, the Pope when himſelf performeth the Office, receiveth ſitting as being a Type of Chriſt, the Maſs Prieſts receive ſtanding by the Canon of the Maſs. For confirmation of all which he cites ſeveral Authors. He denies not but that the People receive kneeling, and ſays that the Prieſt did ſo too untill the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation begot the Canon for his ſtanding. But he denies that kneeling in the very time of receiving, was ever in the Church of *Rome*, any Rite of, or for Adoration of the Sacrament it ſelf: and ſays, never any Pope enjon'd it, nor is there any direction in the Maſs for it. *The Reverend Dr. Stilliigfleet*

hath aſſerted much to the ſame effect in his Unreaſonableneſs of Separation. *Pag.* 15.

2. *How or after what manner ſoever kneeling has been abuſed by the Papiſts to bad purpoſes, yet the abuſe of a thing otherwiſe lawful in it ſelf, does not make the Uſe of it unlawful when ſeparated from that abuſe. Kneeling is abuſed by the Papiſts in their Prayers to the Virgin* Mary, *and other Saints, but this does not make the Uſe of kneeling unlawful in our Prayers to Almighty God.*

3. *Our receiving the Sacrament kneeling in complyance with Publick Order and Authority, can be no appearance or cauſe of Suſpicion of* Bread-Worſhip, *becauſe*

because the same Authority which requires our kneeling therein, has declared in the Rubrick *at the end of the Office of Communion,* That no Adoration is thereby intended, or ought to de done to the Bread and Wine, or to any Corporal Presence of Christs Natural Flesh and Blood, but is intended and meant for a signification and grateful Acknowledgement, of the benefits of Christ therein given. *By this we see all appearance and suspicion of requiring kneeling in order to any Bread-Worship, is quite taken away.*

4. *Standing is a Gesture of Adoration as well as kneeling,* Mark xi. 25. *and yet the Dissenters do not think it*

it Unlawful for that reaſon to receive the Sacrament ſtanding. And if its being a Geſture of Adoration be no juſt exception againſt the Uſe of it in receiving the Sacrament, then the Adoration ſuppoſed or implyed in the Geſture of kneeling, can be no juſt exception againſt the Uſe of that Geſture neither, in the performance of the ſame Duty.

5. *Kneeling its being a Geſture of Adoration is ſo far from making the Uſe of it unlawful in receiving the Sacrament, as that it is the great reaſon why it is not unlawful but fit and convenient. For no good Chriſtian will deny but that it highly becomes us inwardly to Adore our Bleſſed Saviour in the Act of re-*

receiving the Bread and Wine, for his wonderful love in dying for us, and for giving his Fleſh for the Life of the world, and if ſo, then it cannot be incongruous or unfit to expreſs and ſignifie this internal Act of Adoration, by another that is external; for we are to Worſhip and Glorifie him both in our Bodies and our Spirits.

And now me thinks no man who underſtands and conſiders theſe things, ſhould be able to think it Unlawful to kneel in receiving the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Bleſſed Saviour.

THE

THE CONTENTS: OR, THE Heads of Enquiry.

Query I.

WHat is the true Notion of the Universal Church as visible? Pag. 3

Query II.

What is it which prepares or qualifies persons for that relation to God in Christ, which makes them visible members of his Church? 6.

Query III.

What may that be by which People are made visible Church-members. 9

Query IV.

How and when is the Covenant between

between God and men entred into, by which people are externally united to Christ, and visibly made members of his Church? 13

Query V.

How can Infants become visible Church-members by Covenanting with God, since they seem naturally uncapable of doing such a thing? 19

Query VI.

Whether in the baptising of Children, that method of proceeding be not most proper, by which the Children are most directly made to enter into Covenant with God by their Parents? 38

Query VII.

For what reason is Church-membership said to be invisible as well as visible in some, and yet but

but only as visible in others? and from whence doth this difference arise? 41

Query VIII.

Whether men are no otherwise members of the Church as visible, then as they are reputed members of the Church as invisible? 53

Query IX.

Whether God hath granted any right to Church-priviledges, to those who are only of the Church as visible, but not as invisible? 123

Query X.

Why, and for what reason may it be conceived, does Almighty God own and and allow others to be of the Church as visible, than only such as are of the Church as invisible? 173

Query

Query XI:

What is it that makes the difference between the Universal Church as visible, and particular Churches? And what makes the difference between one particular Church and another? 207

Query XII.

Whether from the reason of the Extent and Latitude of visible Church-membership and Communion, which has been discourſed of, the great uſefulneſs of a National Settlement or Conſtitution, for the publick Exerciſe of the Worſhip of God in all parts of a Nation profeſſing Chriſtianity, may not fairly be infer'd and concluded? 225

Query XIII.

Wherein may Catholick-Church Com-

munion conſiſt? And how and by what means is it beſt preſerv'd? 265

Query XIV.

What is the nature of Schiſm? 300

Query XV.

Suppoſing things touching viſible Church-memberſhip and Communion, to be as they have been repreſented in our former Enquiries, Yet how do they tend to leſſen our Church-diviſions? 349

ERRATA.

THe Running Titles of the Book miſtaken. Pag. 22. l. 23. dele *ſince*. p. 31. l. 1. after *all*, add *theſe*. p. 39. l. 27. for *properly* r. *property*. p. 48. l. 5. f. *whom* r. *when*. l. 25. dele *alſo*. p. 54. l. 15. f. *mans* r. *mens*. p. 57. l. 16. f. *man* r. *men*. p. 61. l. 12. f. *taken* r. *broken*. p. 62. l. 2. f. *in* r. *on*. p. 118. l. 8. f. *qualifies* r. *qualified*. p. 195. l. 2. f. *bein* r. *being*. p. 335. l. 19. f. *Rule* r. *Cure*.

CATHOLICISM:

OR,

Several Enquiries touching the Nature and Extent of Visible Church-Membership and Communion, *&c.*

NOTIONS narrower than those which will hold Scripture-measure, concerning the Church, and what it is that makes men to be of it; and concerning Church-Communion, and what it is that qualifies men for it, have been the true reason and cause of our Church-Divisions and Separations in great part, where such notions have been entertained.

My present design therefore, which I intend to pursue in these Papers, is, to inquire into the true measure which the holy Scripture gives us of these things, that thereby we may the more steadily, and with the more certainty make a true Judgment of those separations in Church-Communion, which have been made and applauded by some.

I shall begin with what concerns the being of the Universal Church as Visible, and then inquire how, and by what means men become Members of it. After this, I shall inquire further what it is that qualifies men for, and which gives them a right to external Communion in this Church, as exercised in particular Congregations, and likewise into the nature of Catholick-communion and Schism, and the usefulness of National-Constitutions, for the furtherance of Christian Religion.

QUERY

QUERY I.

WHat is the true notion of the Univerſal Church as viſible?

The Univerſal Church as Viſible, is that Body, Company, or Society of People throughout the whole World, which conſiſts of all ſuch as are *Viſibly Joyned or United to God in Chriſt as Head, by a Religious Bond.* And that which doth diſtinguiſh them from all other People in the World, is that *Relation* they bear to God different from that in which all other People ſtand related to Him. And this Relation is a *Religious* relation, by which they are brought nearer to God than all other People are. All other People are related as humane Creatures to God as their Creator and Governour; but theſe are related to him by another kind of Bond & Obligation, ſuch as is *Spiritual and of a Religious Nature*, of which I am to ſay more afterward.

And then as this Relation is External and Visible, so that by which this Relation *is effected* and wrought, is something *Visible also*, which is the reason why the relation it self is said to be *Visible.*

Now the Persons thus Visibly Related to God in Christ, are not all Religiously Related to Him alike. Some of them are Related and United to him *Internally* and *Invisibly* by an Invisible Bond of Union over and besides their Visible Relation to him, by that which is visible: When as all the rest are Related to him only *Externally*; or if in any respect Internally also, yet not so, or by such a relation as will entitle them to the internal and best sort of priviledges of Gods People, such as Justification, Reconciliation, Pardon and Eternal life.

But yet this difference does not make this body of People which are externally one, by a Relation to God common to the whole, to become two Universal Churches: For *all* which *Essentially* belongs to the being of the Uni-

Univerſal Church, *is not limited* and reſtrained to that part of it, which in reſpect of its internal and inviſible ſtate does differ from, and excel the other; for the *External Relation* to God, *without which* the Univerſal Church does not exiſt, is common to the worſer part of it as well as the better, by reaſon whereof, they cannot be two Churches, and are but one.

One part of the Viſible Church differs from another indeed in reſpect of Internal and Inviſible State before God; this is plain from the Scripture: But then it is as plain from thence, that as touching their External and Viſible ſtate, they are *one*, and that the ſame external priviledges belong to the one as to the other; of which more afterward.

We have not indeed the words *Viſible* and *Inviſible* uſed in Scripture, in reference to the two different ſtates of men in one and the ſame Church; but yet we have thoſe different ſtates of them ſufficiently revealed in Scrip-

ture, which we mean by thoſe words. I need not inſtance in Scriptures of this nature, becauſe they are ſufficiently and commonly known, and I ſhall have further occaſion to mention them afterward.

QUERY II.

WHat is it which prepares or qualifies perſons for that Relation to God in Chriſt, which makes them Viſible Members of his Church?

There is ſomething *previous* to that, by which the Relation in men to God is wrought, which makes them Viſible Members of his Church, and which does capacitate them for it: and that is their being Externally *called* by God to be of the true Religion: Perſons are firſt to become Diſciples, before they be received into the Church by Baptiſm; and their becoming Diſciples, and their being called, is the ſame thing. This is the foun-

foundation in which that Relation is laid, and upon which that which does effect it, is built. And People are thus called, either

1. When they are *Converted* from a *falſe* Religion to own and profeſs the true: And thus the Pagans were called by the Preaching of the Apoſtles, when they were brought to be Diſciples: Or,

2. When Almighty God cauſes them to be *Born*, and to be *Educated* in the true Religion, as thoſe are who are born of Parents externally in Covenant with God. Thus the Jewiſh People from *Abrahams* time downward, were called to be Gods People, and to profeſs the true Religion. And accordingly they were ſtiled Gods *called* ones by the Prophet *Iſa.* 48. 12. *Hearken to me, O* Jacob, *and* Iſrael *my called.* And how were they called? *Abraham* indeed he was called *extraordinarily*, by God who *appeared to him when he was in* Meſopotamia, *before he dwelt in* Charran, *Act.* 7. 2. But his Poſterity were called by being Born

to, and educated in the same Religion which he himself was of; and so were his Childrens Children from Generation to Generation.

And thus has it been in calling Persons to be of the *Christian* Religion. At the first erection of the Church as Christian, men were *extraordinarily* called by the Preaching and Miracles of the Apostles and others; they were called and converted from the Pagan and Jewish Religion, to own the Christian Religion. But since the times of first planting the Gospel up and down in the World, Gods *ordinary* and common method of calling men to the profession of the Christian Religion has been by their Christian Parents *educating* them in it. And indeed their being born of Parents in an especial Relation to God, is in it self a *Providential Call* which qualifies them for the priviledge of being so related also. For upon that account they are both in the Old Testament and the New, stiled a *holy Seed*, that is, a Seed separated from the Infidel World

World to God: And by this the Females of the Jews became Church-Members, and by this were their Males qualifi'd to enter into Covenant with God by Circumciſion, at eight days old. But of theſe things further mention will be made in the proceſs of our Inquiries.

QUERY III.

WHat may that be by which People are made Viſible Church-Members?

That by which People are conſtituted compleatly Viſible Church-Members, *is a mutual Covenanting between God and them*, between Chriſt and his Viſible Members. In which Covenant, God on his part, promiſeth to be their God in Chriſt, to pardon them, and to confer eternal life on them, upon condition they take him only for their God, and Chriſt Jeſus for their Lord and Saviour, by believing in him, and obeying him. And

men

men on their part Covenant to perform the *Condition* of Gods Covenant in taking him for their God, and Christ for their Lord and Saviour, by believing in him, and obeying him. Those words, *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a People*, contain the substance of the Covenant of Salvation, both on Gods part, and mans part, *Heb.* 8 10. The mutual Covenant between God and his *Israel* of old is thus described: *Thou hast avouched this day the Lord to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his Statutes, and his Commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken to his Voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar People, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his Commandments*, Deut. 26 17, 18.

This mutual Covenanting is the *Copulative*, or Bond by which the conjunction is made between the Head and his Members, Christ and his Body the Church: For the nature of it, is to *Unite* the Parties Covenanting, and

to

to convey a mutual intereſt in each other. *I entred into Covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine*, ſaith God, *Ezek.* 16. 8. And this tying or knitting together by Covenant, is called the *Bond of the Covenant*, Ezek. 20. 37. I might multiply places, to ſhew, that mens being *joyned* to the Lord in the common notion of Scripture, is by *Covenanting* with him to be his People. Thus *Jer.* 50. 5. *Come let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, never to be forgotten.* Alſo *Iſa.* 56. 6. *The Sons of the Stranger, that joyn themſelves to the Lord, to ſerve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his Servants, every one that taketh hold of my Covenant*, &c.

That this Union is thus made by Contract and Covenant between God and men, we may the rather believe, and the more eaſily conceive, becauſe the Holy Scripture delights to reſemble and illuſtrate the Union between God and his People, Chriſt and his Church, by the Union that is between Men and their Wives, which

is

is an Union by mutual Contract and Covenanting, the one to take the Woman for his Wife, the other to take the man for her Husband, with promise to deport themselves towards each other, according to the nature of the mutual relation between them, *Ephes.* 5. 28. *Isa.* 54. 5. *Jer.* 31. 31. *Hos.* 2. 19. And those who were *Strangers to the Covenants of promise*, were said to be *without God, and without Christ*; that is not related to him, nor he to them, as his Church and People, *Ephes.* 2. 12.

And here let it be observed and remembred once for all, that the same thing which Unites men to Christ, Unites them to those also who are already one with him by Covenant. Union with the Head, is the Reason of Union with all those Members which make the body of that head; like as a man by becoming a Covenant Servant to a Master, becomes a Member of that Family, and a Fellow-servant to all the rest of the Servants of that Master.

QUERY

QUERY IV.

How and when is the Covenant between God and men entred into, by which People are externally United to Chriſt, and viſibly made Members of his Church?

This Covenanting is tranſacted when People are *Baptized.* For Baptiſm is a Sacred *Rite* inſtituted by Chriſt, by which the Covenant we ſpeak of, is ſolemnly entred into.

As for Almighty God, he has prevented men on his part, in Covenanting with them, and ſtands openly declared in his Word, to be a God to all thoſe, to pardon and ſave them, whoever they be, that ſhall become a People unto him, by believing in him, and ſerving him: And not only ſo, but he has alſo *Authorized* his Miniſters to tranſact with men in his Name, *according to that declaration*, by bringing them into Covenant with him by Baptiſm.

Baptiſm, and thereby to receive them into his Church: For to that end are the *keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven delivered to them, *viz.* to open the door, and to let ſuch into the Church; and this they do as Stewards of God's Houſe.

Now whenever men take hold on this Covenant of God, and openly and publickly Covenant with him to become a People unto him, and to perform the condition of his Covenant with them, in order to the obtaining the benefits promiſed on his part, then and by that means is their viſible Relation to God, to Chriſt, and to his Church, conſtituted and made. And all this a being viſibly Baptized in his Name, doth imply.

For this I conceive is the meaning of their being Baptized into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, *Mat.* 28. 19. Not only that they are Baptized *in* their name, as that ſignifies its being done by their *Authority*, but alſo *into* their name, as that ſignifies their being brought into a *ſpecial Relation*

Relation to them as their God, whom they Covenant to worſhip and ſerve. And therefore from thenceforth they are called by that name into which they are Baptized; like as a Wife is called by the name of her Husband, from that very moment in which the Marriage-Covenant is compleated, *Iſa.* 4. 1.

Hence it is that S. *Paul* ſaith, *That as many as have been Baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt*, Gal. 3. 27. For by that they put on his Name, and put on their Relation to him. For this *Viſible Memberſhip* we ſpeak of, is nothing elſe but a *Viſible Relation* to Chriſt the Head of Chriſtians, and to all thoſe that are viſibly related to him. By Baptiſm they are *planted* into Chriſt, *Rom.* 6. which is another metaphor by which our External Union with Chriſt by Baptiſm is ſignified. And by it they are *Baptized into one body*, 1 Cor. 12. 13.

Thoſe words of St. *Peter* ſhew likewiſe that there was a Covenanting with God in Baptiſm, when he ſays,

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The like figure whereunto Baptiſm doth now ſave us, not the putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Pet. 3. 21. I find that which is here tranſlated, *The anſwer of a good Conſcience*, is rendred by others, the *promiſe* or ſtipulation of a good Conſcience, and by ſome the *queſtion* or *queſtioning* of a good Conſcience. Now if the Greek will bear or countenance theſe ſeveral readings, *Anſwer*, *Stipulation*, *Queſtioning*, yet the matter may be thus well accommodated. The Anſwer of a good Conſcience here ſpoken of, was an anſwer to ſomewhat propoſed, or put queſtionwiſe to be reſolved, or anſwered to by them, who were to be Baptized; and that the Anſwer to it, was of the nature of a Promiſe, Stipulation or Covenant, in reference to God. As when it was propoſed, or put queſtionwiſe to the party to be Baptized, whether he did believe Jeſus Chriſt to be the Son of God, and Saviour of the World? and whether he

he would reform his ſinful life, and in hope of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, henceforth live unto God according to his teaching in the Goſpel : The anſwer to this was aſſertory and promiſſory Covenant-wiſe made, *viz.* that he did ſo believe, and that through Gods aſſiſtance he would ſo reform, and ſo live ; to the performance whereof he *bound himſelf* by being Baptized in his name.

Now when ſuch a promiſſory anſwer as this proceeded from ſuch a frame of mind as did produce, or would produce effects ſutable to ſuch an anſwer or undertaking, it might very well be called the anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God. And St. *Peter* might well ſay, as here we ſuppoſe he does, That the entrance into the Church by Baptiſm, when accompanied with this anſwer of a good Conſcience, would as certainly be Salvation to them through the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, as ever *Noah* & his Families enterance into the Ark, was the means of their eſcaping periſh-

ing by water, that being the figure to which St. *Peter* here likens Baptiſm.

And this way and method of bringing Perſons into the Viſible Church as *Inſtitutive*, by Covenanting with God in Baptiſm, does but anſwer to what was done in *Abrahams* days and after, for the gathering God a Viſible Church out of the World; for that was done by Circumciſion then, which is done by Baptiſm now. For it was the *Sacred Rite* of entering Perſons into Covenant with God, to take God for their God, and to be his People, and for that reaſon it is called *the Covenant of Circumciſion*, by St. *Stephen*, Act. 7. And it was the badge by which they were marked and differenced from others as belonging to God by Covenant, and is therefore ſaid to be the *token* of the Covenant between God and them, *Gen.* 17. 11. And juſt ſo is Baptiſm now, which is come in the room of Circumciſion.

We ſee then how excellently the Old and New Teſtament agree in this point:

point: That ever ſince God has had a Viſible Church on Earth by *Inſtitution*, he has made the way and means of becoming Members of it to be a Covenanting with him by an initiating Ordinance.

QUERY V.

HOW can Infants become Viſible Church-Members by Covenanting with God, ſince they ſeem naturally uncapable of doing ſuch a thing while Infants?

This Inquiry ſeems neceſſary in this place upon occaſion of the reſolution of the former Query. That the Infants of the Circumciſed were to be engaged to God Covenant-wiſe by being Circumciſed, is paſt diſpute. But then there will another queſtion ariſe, and that is, whether they were ſo by their own act and deed, or by the act and deed of their Parents?

We cannot say that they were in their own Persons *active* in Covenanting with God; and that therefore it must needs be by the act and deed of their Parents, that they were by Circumcision engaged to God Covenant-wise. But then yet a further question will arise, and that is, whether those Infants were *obliged* by their Parents entering them into Covenant by Circumcising them, before they were in a capacity of *consenting to it?*

And the Answer is, that there can be no doubt but that they were, supposing they were obliged at all, which none deny but they were. The Children were obliged by what their Parents did in their Minority on their behalf, with a purpose to oblige them, supposing the thing lawful. This was a thing commonly understood among the Jews, and taken for granted, and as it appears, was so accounted by God also. I will give some instances of both.

1. The Jews did so esteem it, and that appears by what they did to oblige

lige their Seed after them to obſerve the days of Purim. *Eſther* 9. 27. *The* Jews *ordained and took upon them, and upon their Seed, and upon all ſuch as joyned themſelves unto them, ſo as it ſhould not fail that they would keep theſe two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year: and that theſe days ſhould be remembred and kept throughout every Generation, every Family, every Province, and every City, and that theſe days of Purim ſhould not fail from among the* Jews, *nor the remembrance of them periſh from their Seed.* So again, 1 *Sam.* 20. 42. *And* Jonathan *ſaid to* David, *Go in peace, for as much as we have ſworn both of us in the Name of the Lord, ſaying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my Seed and thy Seed for ever.*

2. Almighty God did account and hold the Children obliged by what their Parents did, or had done on their behalf, with an intent to oblige them. For proof of this, I will inſtance in ſeveral caſes.

First, the Lord did hold the Children and Posterity of the *Jews* to be obliged by that Covenant which their Fore-fathers had made with the *Gibeonites* in the days of *Joshua*. For there was three years of Famine sent by God in the days of *David*, for that *Saul* and his House had slain the *Gibeonites*, contrary to the Covenant which their Fore-fathers had made with them, tho it was several hundreds of years before, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1.

Secondly, The whole Congregation of *Israel*, Men, Women, and *their little ones* entred into Covenant with God, by his appointment, in the *Land of Moab*, Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12, 13. *Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God----your little Ones and your Wives----that thou shouldest enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God.* And it must be by the act of their Parents since, or some in their stead, that their little Ones did so, by obliging them as much as in them lay, to observe and keep that Covenant when they should come to years of discretion

tion to underſtand it. For it is not eaſie to underſtand how the little Ones that were but Infants, could otherwiſe enter into Covenant with God. And if not, then we ſee from this inſtance likewiſe, that God did account the little Children obliged by what their Parents did on their behalf with an intent to oblige them. Which is yet farther confirmed from what is ſaid in the 14. and 15. verſes, in theſe words. *Neither with you only do I make this Covenant, and this Oath; but with him that ſtandeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and alſo with him that is not here with us this day*; meaning their Poſterity yet to come, as is generally underſtood. For it ſeems that God did intend to oblige the Poſterity to come, to take him for their God, by bringing their Fore-fathers into Covenant with him. Hence it is that the *Jews* defection to Idolatry is aggravated thus; *They rejected his Statutes and his Covenant which he made with their Fathers*, 2 King. 17. 15.

And in this 29. of *Deut.* 25. *Then shall men say, because they have forsaken the Covenant of the Lord God of their Fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the Land of* Ægypt, *&c.* How could that have aggravated their crime, in not observing the Covenant consented to by their Fore-fathers, unless they their Posterity had been obliged by their Fore-fathers consenting to it?

Thirdly, God calls those Children of Idolatrous Jews, *his* Children, whom they Sacrificed to their Idols, and says, *they were born unto him*, Ezek. 16. 20, 21. & 23. 37. And upon what account were they so, but by being the Children of Parents in Covenant with God, tho now they had violated it, and by being farther brought into Covenant with God by their Parents Circumcising them? It seems that Covenant which had obliged the Parents to be Gods, obliged those that were born of them to be so likewise, and much more were they thus obliged, when their Parents had brought

brought them into Covenant with God by Circumciſing them. Tho ſuch Parents had forfeited their Covenant-*intereſt* in God, yet they had not by that, by which they did ſo, made void Gods Covenant-*right* to them and their Children, but that they were ſtill under an Obligation to him to be his. Upon which account it is, as it is probable, that God is called the God of ſome men, when yet they have been very bad, as we may ſee, 1 *King.* 15. 3. 2 *King.* 16. 2. 2 *Chron.* 28. 5. & 36. 5. 12.

Fourthly, It was the Parents that Circumciſed their Children of eight days old, and not the Children themſelves; and yet theſe Children were as firmly obliged by it, when grown to be men, as if they had then Circumciſed themſelves. *I teſtifie again to every man that is Circumciſed, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law,* ſaith St. *Paul*, Gal. 5. 3.

And if they were obliged by what their Parents did in Circumciſing them, to perform the duty on their part,

part, whenever they were capable of it; we may well conceive that by what their Parents did in entring them into Covenant by Circumciſing them, they were inveſted with the benefit promiſed on Gods part, until they deveſted themſelves of it by their actual and wilful tranſgreſſing the Covenant, in not becoming a People unto God, in correſpondence to his Promiſe of being a God unto them.

And the truth is according to Scripture account, little Children, which were devoted to the Service of God by their Parents, and deſigned to be trained up to it, were by a favourable conſtruction reputed to be doers of that Service while but little Children, which they could not actually perform until they were paſt their Child-hood. This is plain and expreſs in one caſe, and by parity of reaſon, muſt be allowed in other under like circumſtances. The Children of the *Koathites*, of a month old, were ſaid to *keep the charge of the Sanctuary*

Sanctuary, becauſe they were deſigned and devoted for it by their Parents then, tho they could not actually perform that Service until they attained unto more years, *Numb.* 3. 27, 28. *Theſe are the Families of the* Koathites, *in the number of all the Males from a month old and upwards, were eight thouſand and ſix hundred, keeping the charge of the Sanctuary.* And the contrary practice of Parents was accompanied with a contrary event in their Children: If they did not devote their Children to the Service of God by Circumciſing them when they ſhould, their Children were reputed breakers of the Covenant, whereas their Parents properly were ſo, by neglecting to fulfil the terms of it on their Childrens behalf. *The Uncircumciſed Man-child, whoſe fleſh of his fore-skin is not Circumciſed, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his People; he hath broken my Covenant*, Gen. 17. 14.

And thus were the little Children of Proſelytes alſo made parties in Gods

Gods Covenant by their Fathers taking hold of it, and by entering their Male-Children with themselves into it by Circumcision, *Exod.* 12. 48.

Nor is it at all unreasonable that the Children should be obliged by what their Parents did to that end in their Minority, so long as it was in nothing but what the Children ought then to have obliged themselves to, if they had been capable to have done so, and which in duty they ought to oblige themselves to, when come to years of discretion, if their Parents had not done it for them before. Parents, as Parents, have so great an Interest and Propriety in their Children, and so great Authority over them, and Power of disposing of them, that what they oblige them to by their act and deed, will, and command, in their Minority, they ought in duty to observe and do; if the things be not unreasonable in themselves, nor countermanded by God, as having a greater Interest in them,

and

and Authority over them than their Parents had. This is ſo reaſonable, as that we ſee God himſelf approves of it, and has founded his own Inſtitution upon it, of obliging little Children by Covenanting with him by the act and deed of their Parents. If a man by his Will and Teſtament, oblige his Son and Heir to any thing which is fair and reaſonable, it is a diſhonourable thing among men for ſuch a Child to eſteem himſelf not obliged thereby to do it. *If it be but a mans Covenant or Teſtament, yet if it be confirmed, no man diſannulleth it,* ſaith S. *Paul*, Gal. 3. 15.

And thus we ſee how little Children become obliged in Covenant with God, and viſible Members of his Church, by the act and deed of their Parents on their behalf, both before the Law of *Moſes* and under it.

Let us now conſider whether the little Children of Chriſtians under the New Teſtament, be not brought into Covenant with God, and made Members of the viſible Church by the

the act and deed of their Parents, as well, and as much as others had been in times of the Old Testament.

It cannot be denied but that Christian-Parents have as great a Propriety in, and as much Authority over their Children now, as ever Parents had under the Law: And if so, they must needs be in the same capacity of obliging their little Children by their act and deed on their behalf, in any thing that is for their benefit, as they were. Nor is it less the duty of Children now to be obliged by what their Parents do in their Minority on their behalf for their benefit, than it was then. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, is of as much force to Children now, as ever it was in Old Testament times. These things are clearly seen by the light of nature. And now we deny not but that it is as much the duty of Parents now, to seek the good of their Children, by doing that for them in their Minority, which tends to their benefit, as ever it was heretofore.

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All things being ſuppoſed it muſt be granted, that Parents are in as good a capacity to oblige their little Children to God in Covenant now, by what they may do on their behalf in their Minority, as ever Parents were heretofore. They may dedicate and devote them to God and his Service by Baptiſm now, as well as Parents could by Circumciſion heretofore. And Baptiſm does as much oblige the Baptized in Covenant with God now, as ever Circumciſion did the Circumciſed heretofore. And it is now as much the benefit of Perſons to be obliged in Covenant with God in their Infancy by Baptiſm, as ever it was for others formerly by Circumciſion.

Now as touching that Warrant or Authority which Chriſtians have to oblige their Infant Children by Baptizing them, to become parties in Gods Covenant, and to perform the terms and condition of it on their part, as they grow up into a capacity of being active therein, I ſhall compare what

what of this kind Christians have, with what *Abraham* and his Seed, and others had for their obliging their Children to be a People unto God by Circumcising them. *Abraham* and his Seed had an express command for it, but the Gentiles, which were not of *Abrahams* natural Seed, had only a favourable allowance and grant, that in case any of them had a mind to joyn themselves to the Jewish Church, and to have communion with them in the way of worship prescribed them, that then in order to this attainment, the Father, or Man himself was to be Circumcised, and all his Males. But otherwise, as Circumcision was not enjoyned the Gentiles, so we do not find that any Prophet or other, were sent abroad among them, to draw them into the Jewish Church; only we read indeed that the Pharisees *compassed Sea and Land to make one Proselyte*, but its probable it was but from among other Jews, to make him of their Sect, to strengthen their party.

Exod. 12 48.

But

But when the Viſible Church was to become Chriſtian, our Saviour commiſſionated his Apoſtles *to go into all the World, and to diſciple all Nations, and Baptize them.* Now if this commiſſioning extended to the Baptizing the little Children of Chriſtian Parents, as well as the Chriſtian Parents themſelves; then here is Warrant and Authority enough for ſuch Parents to engage their Children by Baptizing them in Covenant with God, and to oblige them to perform the terms of it when they ſhall be capable of endeavouring to do ſo.

And that this Commiſſion of our Saviour did extend to the Authorizing the Apoſtles to Baptize ſuch little Children, I have endeavoured to make out in another diſcourſe which I ſhall not here repeat, but refer the Reader to it. [*Addreſs* from *p.* 29. to *p.* 80.] The ſubſtance of what is there ſaid, is reducible to theſe two heads.

1. To ſhew what reaſon the Apoſtles had to underſtand the words

of their Commiſſion to Baptize in this Latitude.

2. What reaſon we have to believe that they did underſtand the words of their Commiſſion in this extenſive ſenſe, and that they did practice accordingly.

Unto what I have ſaid there, I ſhall here add one very conſiderable reaſon to induce us to believe that the Apoſtles did Baptize the little Children of Chriſtians, taken from the unanimous agreement of all Chriſtians in all parts of the World, in the practice of Baptizing Infants in the purer times of the Church, and before the defection into Popery. Now there are ſome things which render it *morally impoſſible*, that there ſhould be ſuch an unanimous agreement in ſuch a practice, unleſs they had it from the Apoſtles, or others ſent by them, in their firſt planting of Chriſtianity in thoſe places.

The Apoſtles went into all the World to Preach the Goſpel, and were our Saviours *Witneſſes unto the utter-*

uttermoſt parts of the earth, according to his Commiſſion. *Their ſound went into all the Earth, and their words unto the ends of the World: The Goſpel was Preached to every Creature under Heaven*, as St. *Paul* ſaith. There are ſome things which make it morally impoſſible that there ſhould be ſuch an univerſal agreement as aforeſaid in all places, upon any other account, or for any other reaſon than their firſt receiving this practice of Baptizing Infants, from the Apoſtles, in their firſt planting of Chriſtianity there. As

Rom. 10. Col. 1. 6. 23.

1. The vaſt *diſtance of one place* from another, where the Chriſtians lived, made it morally impoſſible they ſhould come into this uſage by combination, or imitation of one another.

2. The *diverſity* of their *Languages* made it impoſſible that this ſameneſs of practice ſhould grow out of any mutual correſpondence, or intelligence held by them.

3. If theſe things had not made it impoſſible, and if it could be ſuppoſed that the Chriſtians in all parts, notwithſtanding their diſtance of place, and diverſity of Language, might have held ſuch correſpondence as by agreement to have introduced ſuch a practice as they had not from the Apoſtles, but had been impoſed upon them at firſt by ſome *Innovators*; yet it is morally impoſſible it ſhould ſteal into all Churches, and every where, without ſome *known oppoſition* from ſome good men or other, if it had not been Apoſtolical.

We cannot with any reaſon think that all Chriſtians both in office, and out of office in the Church, would have ſuffered ſuch an Innovation as this (if it had been an Innovation) without ſuch conſiderable oppoſition as would have been taken notice of by ſome Author or other, who lived in or near ſuch time in which it had been firſt brought into the Church.

Since then no man is able to aſſign the beginning of this practice ſhort of the

the Apoſtles times : And ſince the whole world of Chriſtians were agreed in it, in the pureſt times of the Church, for ought appears to the contrary : And ſince all Chriſtians, how much ſoever they have differed in other things, have yet all along agreed in this, as much as they have in the obſervation of the Lords day, a very few only excepted, and thoſe chiefly, or rather only, as have appeared ſince *Luthers* days, or the *beginning* of the *Reformation* : And ſince the Apoſtles practice recorded in Scripture of their Baptizing whole Houſholds, gives us ground to believe they practiſed the ſame in all places where they have been, and that their doing ſo, was the reaſon and ground of the univerſal practice of Baptizing Infants in all Churches firſt planted by them, and in thoſe ſucceeding them : I ſay all theſe things conſidered, there remains little reaſon for any impartial man to doubt, but that the Apoſtles did practiſe Infant Baptiſm

in pursuance of their Commission.

QUERY VI.

Whether in the Baptizing of Children, that method of proceeding be not most proper, by which the Children are most directly made to enter into Covenant with God by their Parents?

The reason of this Query arises out of the matters discussed in the two former. For if that Union and Relation between God and men, by which they become Members of his Visible Church, is made by entering into Covenant with him, to be his People, as he with them to be their God: And if little Children are obliged in Covenant with God, by what their Parents do in causing them to be Baptized with intent thereby so to oblige them; then I propose it to be considered, whether it will not thence follow that it is most proper to demand of the Parents, whether

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in bringing their Children to be Baptized, they do not intend thereby to dedicate them to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and to engage them as much as in them lies, to be Gods faithful Servants, and to believe and live according to the Doctrine and Precepts of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? or ſomewhat to that effect. And whether likewiſe ſuch Anſwers from the Parents ſhould not be expected, as are moſt ſuitable to ſuch demands?

And further, it would be conſidered, Whether Infants can be ſo well, or ſo directly and properly obliged to God in Covenanting with him in Baptiſm, by what Sponſors, which are not their Parents, then do to oblige them, as they may by what their Parents themſelves may do to that end.

And the reaſon of this propoſal or queſtion is this: If the Childrens being obliged to do that when they come to Age, which Parents obliged them to in their Baptiſm, does depend upon their Parents properly in them,

and

and authority over them, as is ſuppoſed it does from what has been formerly argued; then they cannot be ſo properly obliged by what other Sponſors do in their behalf at their Baptiſm, which have no ſuch property in them, or authority over them.

It is true indeed, Parents are not wholly unconcerned in entering their Children into Covenant with God by Baptiſm, when yet Sponſors act in the Parents ſtead: For it is the Parents that cauſe their Children to be Baptized, and what the Sponſors act, is by the Parents procurement; and upon theſe accounts it is interpretatively their act: But yet Parents immediately, and in their own perſons acting the part of entering their Children into Covenant, ſeems more proper and better to anſwer the nature of the thing. Sponſors may be more uſeful in caſe Parents of Children to be Baptized are dead, as poſſibly it might be the caſe of ſome Children, whoſe Parents were Martyr'd in the Pri-

Primitive times, from which perhaps that uſage in the Church took its firſt riſe. There are other caſes in which Sponſors or Pro-parents may be uſeful and neceſſary, but hardly ſo as to exclude Parents from their proper work.

But I ſpeak of theſe things with ſubmiſſion to thoſe of better judgment and more authority, having only offered them to conſideration.

QUERY VII.

FOr what reaſon is Church-Membership ſaid to be Inviſible as well as Viſible in ſome, and yet but only as Viſible in others? And from whence does this difference ariſe?

This difference proceeds from the difference there is between Viſible and Inviſible Chriſtianity, and from the different Union between Chriſt the Head, and his Members which is cauſed thereby.

By

By inviſible Chriſtianity, I mean thoſe inward acts and affections of ſoul, by which men *abhor that which is evil*, *and cleave to that which is good*, which are wrought by a ſerious aſſent of the mind unto the truth of the doctrine and great motives of the Goſpel, by which they are convinced of the neceſſity of repentance and holy living, in order to their eſcaping everlaſting miſery, and becoming eternally happy.

By viſible Chriſtianity, I mean external and viſible acts of Religion, in reference both to God and men; ſuch as is the *profeſſion* of the God that made the World, to be the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath ſent, to be his Son, and the reſt of the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, and ſuch other acts as conſiſt in an external performance of the external acts of worſhip due to this God and Saviour, and in acts of Juſtice and Charity towards men, and in ſobriety of behaviour in reference to a mans ſelf.

Now by the internal and inviſible Chriſtianity forementioned, in conjunction with that which is external, the Covenant entred into in Baptiſm, is ſo performed, that by it a man is internally and inviſibly united to Chriſt, and conſequently to all thoſe who are inviſibly one with him. But viſible Chriſtianity alone, is but an external performance of the Covenant entred into in Baptiſm; and this amounts to no more than an external and viſible Union with Chriſt, and with his Church as viſible. By this much then we may underſtand wherein the difference between viſible and inviſible Church-membership lies, and from whence it doth ariſe.

Now that the internal Chriſtianity which conſiſts in an internal change in the faculties of the ſoul, to wit, in their apprehenſion, inclination, motions and operations in reference to their various objects of good and evil, does produce or obtain an internal and inviſible Union of men with the

the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, will appear if we conſider theſe things.

1. This internal Renovation of ſoul contains in it an Union with God by *adheſion*; for by it a man doth with his heart and ſoul, and out of judgment and choice, *cleave* unto the Lord: which in the ſence of Scripture is a being *joyned to him. He that is joyned, or he that cleaveth unto the Lord, is one ſpirit*; for it is rendred by both words, 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. And for a man firmly and reſolvedly to adhere and ſtick to the Lord, and to the intereſt of his honour and glory in the world, in worſhipping, loving, and obeying him, and in placing his affiance in him, as his only God and Saviour, come what will (which is his cleaving to him) is ſuch a moral *Union* with God, as the nature of man is capable of.

2. This internal Renovation worketh an inviſible Union with God, by *a participation of the divine nature*, as the Apoſtle phraſeth it, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4.

By

By which participation, men are morally united to God. For they are thereby renewed to the Image of God, in Knowledge, Righteouſneſs, and Holineſs, and ſo are made one Spirit, or one in ſpirit with Him, according to that of the Apoſtle in 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. *He that is joyned to the Lord is one ſpirit*, or of one ſpirit. For ſo far as ſuch an one is partaker of the Divine nature by Renovation, he judgeth of good and evil, as God judgeth, and loves and hates, and deſigns the ſame things that he doth.

3. By this Renovation of the Inner man, men come to have the ſame Spirit of God, and of Chriſt, to *reſide and dwell in them*, by which their *Union* with the Father and the Son, is compleated. The holy Spirit firſt prepares them as living Temples, or an Habitation for himſelf to dwell in, by renewing them in a leſs degree, and then comes and takes up his abode, and dwells in them, by affording them a more conſtant, and more plentiful

tiful influence and assistance. And the same Spirit dwelling both in Christ and in them, the *Union* between them becomes more intimous and more entire. *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*, 1 John 4. 13. As the Union of all the members of a natural body is not made so much by their contiguity or close joyning, as by being all animated by one and the same spirit which is in all the parts; so it is in the Union of the Head and Members of the Mystical Body, Christ and the Church, and every particular Member of it; for they are united by the quickening power and influence of the same Spirit which abides both in the head and all the members.

By what hath been said touching the Invisible *Union* between Christ and his Church as Invisible, it will be easie to discern whence and for what reason it is that many who are really Members of the Church as Visible, are yet no more but such, and not

at

at all of the Church as Inviſible. And it is for want of ſuch an inward change of the mind and will, and all the affections of the ſoul, in reference to ſin and duty, good and evil, as is made by a vigorous aſſent of the mind to the great truths of the Goſpel, and the mighty motives of it, and by a ſerious and frequent conſideration of them, and how a mans own ſelf is concerned in them in point of happineſs or miſery, according as he yields up himſelf to be governed by them, or refuſes to do ſo.

I do not deny but that ſuch who are Members of the Church, but only as it is Viſible, may yet in ſome ſort really aſſent unto the truth of what the Goſpel reveals, touching Chriſt, his being the Son of God, and Saviour of Sinners; yea, touching the neceſſity of Repentance, in order to the obtaining the pardon of Sin and Eternal Life by his ſufferings. I doubt not but that theſe may in ſome ſort believe, and undiſſemblingly profeſs to believe otherwiſe concerning the

the Christian doctrine, than profess'd Infidels do, tho not so seriously and effectually as the truly Regenerate. We cannot say they properly dissemble, whom they profess to believe the Christian doctrine, or Articles of the Christian faith: We cannot say their words are knowingly contrary to the sentiment of their minds and thoughts in such a profession. We see by experience that some Sea-faring men otherwise vicious in their lives, yet when taken Captive by Infidels, will endure any hardship, rather than be drawn to say they do not believe the Christian doctrine; which is a good evidence that they do in some sence really believe it, tho perhaps not so effectually as the truly Regenerate do. There were many in our Saviours days, of whom the Scripture says that they did believe in Christ, whose faith yet was not powerful enough to Regenerate them. And such was *Simon Magus* also; and such were those who as St. *James* supposed had faith, and yet not justified by it, it being

Being *alone*, and but a *dead faith*; and ſuch faith is the faith, as may juſtly be feared of many at this day, who are Chriſtians by profeſſion, and of the Viſible Church.

Nay farther, I do not deny but that this faith of theirs in conjunction with ſome external motives, may produce a form of Godlineſs, ſo that they may do moſt of the *external* acts of Religion which Regenerate men do. They may enter into Covenant with God in Baptiſm, and worſhip him only, and in the name of Chriſt: They may openly own the Articles of the Chriſtian faith, and with zeal diſpute for them. They may frequent the Ordinances of publick worſhip; ſuch as Prayer, hearing the Word, and the Lords Supper, and may obſerve the Lords day. They may be free from groſs and ſcandalous ſins, do many acts of juſtice in their dealing with men, and give Alms alſo. They may be thus outwardly Righteous and externally Religious, and yet be unrenewed as touching the inward man.

They may for all this be full of Envy, Malice, Hatred, and Revengeful thoughts, of Emulation, Wrath, and Pride; of Ambition, Covetousness, and Inordinate affection; which are sins of that sort which the Apostle calls *works of the flesh*, and such as exclude men out of the Kingdom of Heaven. And while they remain thus unrenew'd in their minds and wills; what ever faith or repentings they may otherwise have, or whatever their outward performances may be, yet they fall short of being of the Invisible Church, for want of that inward renovation that invisibly unites men to Christ.

But yet tho this external Christianity fore-mentioned will not make men Members of the Church Invisible, yet it will evidence and declare them to be of the Church as visible, and continue them in it. For it is in some sort (tho but partial indeed) an external performance of the Covenant of Baptism, by which they had their first enterance into the Visible Church, and

and by which their external relation to God in a religious ſence, was firſt conſtituted. It is in reſpect of external Chriſtianity, that ſuch are ſaid to be in Chriſt, who yet are but unfruitful branches (*John* 15.) devoid of that fruit which is called the *fruit of the ſpirit*, which conſiſts of thoſe internal qualifications deſcribed in *Gal.* 5. 22, 23. And their being *in* Chriſt, ſignifies an external *Union* between them; which is made by external Chriſtianity. And in ſuch an external reſpect, the whole multitude of the Children of *Iſrael*, who did not violate the bond of the Covenant between God and them, by running into Idolatry, were ſaid to *cleave* unto the Lord, which is another word which ſignifies their being Joyned or United to him; which can be underſtood but of an external Union by external Religion, in reference to many of them at leaſt. Thus in *Deut.* 4. 3, 4. it is ſaid, *All the men that followed Baal-peor, the Lord thy God hath deſtroy'd them from among you: but ye*

that did cleave unto the Lord your God, are alive every one of you this day. Where we see their continuing to worship the God of *Israel* in the use of his Ordinances, without following *Baal-peor* as some others did, is called their *cleaving* unto God. And by that they continued their relation unto God uninterrupted. But of this I shall have occasion to say more in the next inquiry.

Thus we see that it is visible Christianity that makes men to be of the Visible Church, and Invisible Christianity which makes them to be of the Church as Invisible. Those that have visible Christianity, are thereby differenced from the Infidel and Idolatrous World on the one hand, and by their having no more, they are differenced from the Invisible Church on the other, and thereby set in a middle state between both, and that is in the Visible Church.

QUERY

QUERY VIII.

WHether men are no otherwiſe Members of the Church as Viſible, than as they are Reputed Members of the Church as Inviſible?

Thoſe of the Congregational way, whether called *Independents, or Anabaptiſts*, have been wont ſtrongly to adhere to the Negative of this queſtion, *That men are not otherwiſe Members of the Church as Viſible, than as they are reputed of the Church as Inviſible.* And it is upon the authority of this Hypotheſis, *that they refuſe to admit any to Church-Communion, but ſuch in whom in their judgment, are found evidences or ſigns of Inviſible Church-Memberſhip or ſaving Grace: That none but ſuch have right to Communion in the inſtituted Ordinances of worſhip:*

That particular Churches are Constituted or to be Constituted only of such.

But others do think that these do make the Visible Church much narrower than the Scriptures do: and do hold that all that are visibly in Covenant with God, are thereby joyned in Relation to him, and are made Members of his Visible Church, as well those which have no saving grace as those that have. Our business then for the present will be to consult the Scriptures in this case.

Before God had a Church in the World by *Institution*, mans visible relation to God was known by their worshipping of *him only*, whether they had any other signs of saving grace or no, and tho they were in no visible Covenant with him. They were known to whom they did belong, by whom they worshipped: *Every man walked in the name of his God*, as the Prophet speaks, *Mica.* 4 5. and those that worshipped a strange God, were *the Children of a strange God*, (Mal. 2. 11.) as those that worshipped

ſhipped the true God, were counted his Children. Natural Religion, eſpecially in point of worſhip, was then the meaſure of judging mens viſible relation to God.

But when Almighty God was pleaſed to ſet on foot, and begin the gathering him a Viſible Church out of the reſt of the World in a way of divine *Inſtitution*, he laid the foundation of it in his tranſaction with *Abraham*, by inſtituting and ordaining two things.

1. That as God by Covenant engaged to *Abraham* to be his God, and the God of his Seed, ſo *Abraham* and his Seed muſt engage to God by Covenant to be his Servants, and a People unto him.

2. That this Covenant ſhould be entred into by *Abraham* and his Seed, by obſerving ſuch a Sacred Rite as God inſtituted and appointed for that purpoſe, and that was *Circumciſion*. And this was continued for this uſe, until the Meſſias came and inſtituted *Baptiſm*, another Sacred

Rite for the ſame end. Now in Gods thus founding his Viſible Church, there was no ſuch thing as the appointing ſaving Grace in the judgment of charity, to be the condition of mens admiſſion into his Church by Circumciſion : But the Lord abſolutely commanded that *Abraham* and his Male Seed after him, and all Born in the Houſe, or bought with their money, ſhould be Circumciſed without any limitation or condition in reference to the appearance of ſaving Grace. By which it is evident that God did not deſign to have no others of his Viſible Church than ſuch as had ſaving Grace.

Now the Poſterity of *Abraham*, when they came out of *Egypt*, were by virtue of their Covenanting with God, all of them bad as well as good, viſibly related to God as his People; and ſo his as no other people were. And I hope we may ſafely ſay, that *God himſelf accounted them to be*, what *Moſes* and others by *divine inſpiration* ſaid they were. And if ſo, then we may

may ſay, that Almighty God did account them all bad as well as good (tho not in the moſt emphatical ſence) to be his *choſen* elected and adopted People (*Deut.* 4. 37. *Rom.* 9. 4.) *his Called*, (Iſa. 48. 12.) *a People near unto him* (Pſal. 148. 14.) *his Saints his holy People*, (Deut. 7. 6. & 33. 3. Pſal. 50. 5.) *his Children* (Deut. 14. 1.) *a ſpecial and peculiar People unto himſelf*, (Deut. 7. 6. & 14. 2.) *his Inheritance*, (Deut. 9. 29.) *his Portion*, (Deut. 32. 9.) *his peculiar Treaſure*, Pſal. 135. 4.

All theſe Titles and Appellations given them by God, or by man inſpired by God in giving them, do with as much plainneſs as words can expreſs, ſhew, that God himſelf owned them for his People, his Children, and related to him in ſuch a ſence as other People not in Covenant with him, were not.

Now that they were not thus called or accounted for any ſuch reaſon as becauſe they had ſaving grace, or becauſe they were reputed to be of the Church

Church as Inviſible, will appear with full evidence. For the ſame inſpired Man *Moſes*, at the ſame time, and in the ſame Book, in and by which God owned them for his People under many of the foreſaid appellations, did from God charge them with ſuch and ſo much guilt, as no man can with any colour of reaſon ſay was conſiſtent with an Inviſible Church-ſtate.

Thus in *Deut.* 9. *Thou art a ſtiff-necked People*, verſ. 6. *From the day thou didſt depart out of the Land of* Egypt, *even until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious againſt the Lord*, verſ. 7. *They have corrupted themſelves, they have quickly turned aſide*, verſ. 12. *I have ſeen this People, and behold it is a ſtiff-necked People.* verſ. 13. *You have been Rebellious againſt the Lord from the day that I knew you*, verſ. 24. *I know thy rebellion and thy ſtiff neck*, chap. 31. 27. *They have corrupted themſelves, their ſpot is not the ſpot of his Children, they are a perverſe and crooked generation*, chap. 32. 5. *When the Lord ſaw it, he abhorred them,*

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becauſe of the provoking of his Sons, and of his Daughters, verſ. 19. *A froward Generation, Children in whom is no faith*, verſ. 20. *They are a Nation void of Counſel, neither is there any underſtanding in them*, verſ. 28.

Theſe things are charged on them generally and in the groſs. And conſidering ſome other paſſages, there is great cauſe to ſuſpect that much the major part of them at leaſt were thus guilty. For in *Numb.* 14. 2. its ſaid, *That all the Children of* Iſrael *murmured againſt* Moſes, *and againſt* Aaron; *and the whole Congregation ſaid, Would God we had died in the Land of* Egypt, *or would God we had died in the Wilderneſs.* And verſ. 10. *All the Congregation bade ſtone them with ſtones.* And verſ. 33. *Your Children ſhall wander in the Wilderneſs forty years, and bear your Whoredoms, until your Carcaſes be waſted in the Wilderneſs.* And verſ. 35. *I will ſurely do it to all this evil Congregation that are gathered together againſt me.* And verſ. 29. *Your Carcaſes ſhall fall in this Wilderneſs; and all that are num-*

numbred of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured againſt me.

All theſe things conſidered, they will not ſuffer us with any plauſible pretence to ſay, or to think that God owned this People in the bulk of them, as his Viſible Church, for any ſuch reaſon, as becauſe they ſeemed to be Inviſibly related to him by ſpecial grace. And if not, then it muſt be upon ſome, or all of theſe accounts following, unleſs any other more likely can be thought of, which I am not able to foreſee, nor to ſuſpect.

1. They were in ſome ſort *holy* and ſeparated unto God, as they were *Born of Parents* who were *in Covenant with him.* Upon which account they were called a *holy Seed*, Ezra 9. 2. Now the holineſs of perſons always ſignifies ſome ſuch ſpecial relation to God, which is not common to all perſons as ſuch. Almighty God has another kind of right to the Children

dren of ſuch as are his by Covenant, than he has to the Children of thoſe that are not, as indeed he is in ſome ſort more a God to ſuch Children, than he is to the Children of others. God has a Right to all Children, and is related to them, and they to him, as he is their Creator, and they his Creatures. But he has a more ſpecial right to the Children of them that are in Covenant with him, tho ſuch Parents have taken Covenant with God. And thus the Children of thoſe Jews which were offered in Sacrifice by the Parents unto their Idols, were claimed by God as *his* Children, and as *Born to him*, Ezek. 16. 20. *Thou haſt taken thy Sons and thy Daughters whom thou haſt born unto me, and theſe thou haſt ſacrificed to them to be deſtroy'd.* verſ. 21. *Thou haſt ſlain my Children to cauſe them to paſs through the fire*, chap. 23. 37. *They cauſed the Sons whom they bare unto me, to paſs for them through the fire.* Tho theſe wicked Parents had forfeited their right to the benefits of the Covenant

venant in Gods part, through their defection from him to Idolatry, yet they had not thereby made void his right to them, and to their Children which he had by their having entred into Covenant with him to be his, and therefore he calls them *his* Children, and says they were *born unto him*. And it was in this respect in all likelihood, that St. *Paul* called those Children *holy* that had one believing Parent, tho the other were an unbeliever, 1 *Cor.*7. 14. The Children became related to God in some sort as his (for that's the meaning of their being holy) by the Parents having devoted themselves to God by Covenant. How else could the Females among the Jews be related to God as his, when they were not Circumcised? By which yet the Males became Gods by right of Covenant, and so his, as that their Children became his, and to be related to him in an inferiour degree by right of birth. And in this sence those words of St. *Paul* may be understood when he says, *If the*

the root be holy, so are the branches, Rom. 11. 16. And thus *Jews by nature* (or by birth) are opposed to *Sinners of the Gentiles*, as Saints are opposed to Sinners, *Gal.* 2. 15.

And we shall find that Almighty God did not only claim a right to the natural Seed of Jewish Parents, by virtue of their being in Covenant with him, but also a right to those Strangers of which they were absolute owners, whether they were born in the house, or bought with money, both Fathers and their Children: and accordingly he commanded them to be mark'd for his, and to be brought into Covenant with him by Circumcising all the Males both Fathers and Children, *Gen.* 17. 12, 13, 23. And thus again, when any other Strangers did voluntarily joyn themselves to the Lord to be his Servants in a way of Proselytism; the Lord by virtue of the Fathers doing so, laid claim to their Children, and required them to be brought into Covenant with him by their Males being Circumcised.

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And thus we see why the whole body of the Jewish Nation might be all called Gods holy People, and yet not upon account of inherent sanctification.

By the way then, all these things considered, we may observe one reason why (as we may well conceive) the Apostles in their times Baptized the Households of Christian Parents when they Baptized the Parents themselves. For the Children of Christian Parents became holy unto God with a *Relative* holiness, by their Parents being his by Covenant, as well as the Children by Jewish and Proselyted Parents had been in times before, as I shewed before from those words, *Else were your Children unclean, but now are they holy*, 1 Cor. 7. 14. And they being so, I cannot apprehend any reason why they should not be as capable of being brought into Covenant with God by Baptism, as ever the Children of Jews, Proselytes, and of the Bond-men of the Jews, had been by Circumcision. And until there

there can be a good reaſon aſſigned for the contrary, it is but reaſonable to believe that the Apoſtles in Baptizing Houſholds, did Baptize little Children. For ſuch Children being born of Parents in Covenant with God, were qualified for being entred into Covenant themſelves: becauſe they were thereby called by God to profeſs the true Religion, ſuppoſing they ſhould live to be inſtructed by their Parents; who always teach their Children to be of the ſame Religion which they profeſs themſelves. And this was under the Old Teſtament, and has been under the New, Gods ordinary way of calling men to profeſs the true Religion, as I have formerly ſhew'd.

2. Another reaſon why the whole body of the Jews were called *Gods Children, his Saints, or holy People*, might be, becauſe they were ſuch by Covenant, in an external conſideration; that is, they had Covenanted with God to be ſuch; and by that they were alſo ſeparated from other

People that were not called by his Name.

3. Becauſe of a partial performance of Covenant on their part. For they worſhipped the true God, and him only as yet (except in the caſe of the golden Calf) who therefore was called the God of *Iſrael*, when almoſt all the world beſides worſhipped Idols. They alſo worſhipped him with a worſhip of his own appointment; the matter of their worſhip conſiſted of Gods own inſtituted Ordinances, when the worſhip of all the reſt of the world, in a manner, conſiſted of Superſtitious and Idolatrous inventions. And by theſe they were a People ſeparated to God, and differenced from the reſt of the world: and thus far they glorified the God of *Iſrael*, when the reſt of the world generally diſhonoured him by falſe worſhip, both in the object and ſubject of it.

That which they were chiefly wanting in, was *Morality*, a true love to God, confidence in him, and ſubmiſſion

miſſion to him; and in juſtice and charity towards men, and humility, temperance, and ſobriety in reſpect of themſelves.

Notwithſtanding which, God did not put this People of his out of his ſpecial protection, by delivering them into the hands of Spoilers, as in the days of the Judges, until they ſo groſly broke Covenant with him, as to *ſerve other Gods*. And when the Lord did at laſt put them away from him, as it were, and caſt them out of his ſight by ſending them into Captivity, the ten Tribes into *Aſſyria*, and the two into *Babylon*, yet this did not befall them, until they had forſaken the Covenant they had made with God, and that in the higheſt, in *worſhipping other Gods, and in obſerving the Statutes of the Heathen*. Tho their immoralities were otherwiſe very great, yet God did not give this People a *Bill of Divorce*, until they had horribly corrupted themſelves with ſpiritual Whoredome in point of worſhip. See how their being caſt

off by God is charged in ſpecial upon this kind of breach of Covenant, *Deut.* 29. 25. & 31, 20. 2 *King.* 17. 15, 16, 35, 38. *Jer.* 22. 9. *Ezek.* 16. 59. and other places. All which does intimate that Almighty God owned them for his People externally, ſo long as they owned him only for their God, according to their Covenant with him, tho otherwiſe they had great guilt upon them.

This ſtill confirms what was ſaid before; that tho the immoralities of this People, for the generality of them, were ſuch in other reſpects, as that all that they had done in Covenanting, and in a partial performance of Covenant, could not give them the reputation of being Members of the *Inviſible Church*, yet their Covenant with God, and partial performances of it, in worſhipping him only with a worſhip of his own appointment, did denominate them in an external and viſible reſpect to be his People, and ſo his, as the reſt of the world were not.

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By the way then, if thoſe of this Church under the Old Teſtament were ſtiled Saints, a holy People, and the like, upon other accounts, and in other reſpects than their being really and *inherently holy*, as I have ſhewed they were, by inſpired men, then it cannot be concluded but that the People of the Churches in the New Teſtament were ſo likewiſe, when the Apoſtles in their Epiſtles to them, ſtiled them *Saints, the Sanctified in Chriſt Jeſus*, and the like. For the ſame Epithetes and Appellations ſignifie but the ſame thing in the Old Teſtament as in the New. In both they ſignifie a People ſeparated from the Pagan unbelieving world, unto God, among whom ſome were more ſo, and ſome leſs, ſome by *external* Covenant and profeſſion, and ſome by that and much more, to wit, by *the Renovation of the whole inner man.*

I the rather note this as I paſs along, becauſe thoſe of the Congregational way, lay ſo great a ſtreſs as

they do upon St. *Pauls* stiling the Churches to whom he wrote, *Saints*, for the proving as they would have it, that none but such as are savingly sanctified are Church-matter, or to be admitted as Church-Members, except when it is done through mistake of them that admit them.

Having taken a brief survey how things stand related, touching Visible Church-Membership under the Old Testament; I shall now proceed to enquire how matters stand declared touching the same under the New. And our inquiry must be whether persons adult, are by no other means Visible Church-Members, unless they are *reputatively* Members of the Church as *Invisible*. Or whether they do not become truly Members of the Visible Church in Scripture account by their voluntary Covenanting by Baptism with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, tho it should be supposed that there is not enough in them to denominate them Members of the Church as *Invisible*.

The

The queſtion is not whether it does not become thoſe who admit men into the Church by Baptiſm and the Baptiſmal Covenant, to think the beſt of them who are ſo admitted, and to hope they do it with a ſincere mind, when they therein give up themſelves to God. But whether their due admiſſion thereto does depend upon ſuch a judgment in thoſe that admit them? Or whether ſuch Perſons may be refuſed, and not ſuffered to Covenant with God in Baptiſm, and thereby to enter into the Church, tho they offer themſelves thereto and deſire it, in caſe thoſe whoſe office and place it is to admit men thereto, ſhould be unſatisfied touching the truth of their ſaving Converſion or Regeneration?

Or thus, the queſtion is not whether it be not the duty of every man that enters into Covenant with God in Baptiſm, to do it with a ſincere mind, and with all his heart: But whether this be required by way of *condition*, without which it is neither

lawful for the person himself to Covenant with God, nor for others to suffer him to do it, if they suspect he will do it with such a frame of mind, as is short of Regeneration.

Nor is the question whether a man might not be refused admission into the Church, in case there were cause to suspect him to have an evil design in desiring it, to betray the Christians to their Enemies; upon account of which suspicion its probable the Disciples refused *Saul*'s joyning with them after his Conversion, tho he desired it, until they had received better satisfaction concerning him. But the question is whether such as have only some general and indistinct belief that Christ is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world by his death; and that the way of Christianity is the way of Salvation, and do desire admission into the Christian Church to be further instructed in that way; and in order thereto are willing to enter into Covenant with God, and to be Baptized: I say the question

queſtion is, whether ſuch may be ſuffered to Covenant with God, and enter into the Church by Baptiſm, ſuppoſing them as yet to have no thorow ſaving work of Converſion wrought in them, but only ſo much as may be hoped is preparatory and diſpoſitory thereto, but yet have ſomething, tho not all, which is neceſſary to it, and whoſe profeſſion is ſerious and ſincere ſo far as it goes, as that is oppoſed to diſſembling knowingly.

And to prove that they may, and that the lawfulneſs of ſuch Covenanting by Baptiſm, does not depend upon their being ſavingly Regenerate: and that our Saviour himſelf owns Unregenerate men received into the Viſible Church by ſuch Covenanting in Baptiſm, to be as well Members of it, as the Regenerate, I ſhall offer ſeveral things.

1. And I ſhall lay down this firſt as a foundation to build upon in this proof, *viz.* That it is not a thing unlawful in it ſelf, for ſome ſuch as are not of the Church as Inviſible by regenerating

nerating Grace, to enter into Covenant with God to be his People; nor is such a qualification enjoyned as a necessary condition of doing so.

When all the Males at Age in *Abrahams* House were commanded to enter into Covenant with God by Circumcision: And when his Seed after him were required to cause all the Male-strangers bought with their money to do the like: And when the Proselytes from among the Gentiles were required to Circumcise themselves and all their Males, and thereby to enter into Covenant with God: I say in all this there was no such thing as their being Circumcised in heart, enjoyned as a condition of their so entring into Covenant by Circumcision. The Lord also commanded *Joshua* to Circumcise all the *Hebrew* Males that in the space of forty years had been born in the Wilderness, which was an entering them into Covenant with God, and this without any condition of such qualification as would have made them of the Church as Invisible. Nay

Nay, Almighty God at another time commanded all *Iſrael*, Men, Women, and Children, and the Strangers in their Camp, to enter into Covenant with him, and into his Oath, *Deut.* 29. 10, 11, 12. This command was abſolute and peremptory alſo, and without condition. The Lord did not in this, nor in any of the other inſtances require men to enter into Covenant with him only upon this condition, that they did already truly fear him, and ſincerely love him, or otherwiſe to forbear: No, but he required this Covenanting with him, to this end, that they might truly fear and love him, and cleave to him only; as a means to ſuch an end.

No man will ſay that Almighty God did fore-know when he commanded all thoſe fore-mentioned to enter into Covenant with him, that in doing it, they would all of them be qualified with ſuch regenerating Grace, and ſpiritual Life, as all thoſe are, who are of the Church as Inviſible; which yet they muſt ſay or ſup-

suppose, if they will say, that the lawfulness of Covenanting with God does depend upon their being Regenerate when they do it; unless they will say, that God commanded such of them as were not so qualified, to do a thing which in its own nature was sinful and unlawful, which I presume none will dare to say.

By all which, it appears with full evidence, as I apprehend, that it is not unlawful for some such as are not of the Church as invisible, to enter into Covenant with God to be his People: And that the lawfulness of such Covenanting does not depend upon mens being qualified with Regenerating Grace. And if so, then the lawfulness of mens being admitted into the Visible Church by Covenanting with God by Baptism, does not depend upon their being reputed Members of the Church as Invisible, or such as are Regenerate.

2. My next reason or argument I draw from our Saviours Commission to his Apostles, directing them, who

or

or what manner of Perſons they ſhould Baptize, and by Baptiſm receive into his Viſible Church, *viz.* ſuch as were made Diſciples. The words of the Commiſſion run thus, *Go ye therefore teach all Nations, Baptizing them*, &c. Or *Diſciple* all Nations, or make Diſciples in all Nations, ſo others render it. The Apoſtles then according to their Commiſſion, were to Baptize all thoſe who firſt were made Diſciples, and by the Baptiſmal Covenant to enter them into the Church.

Mens being *made Diſciples* then was the *rule* given by our Saviour, by which the Apoſtles were to govern themſelves, touching *who* and what manner of Perſons they were to *receive* into the Church *by Baptiſm*. And thoſe were Diſciples, who did attend upon the teaching of Chriſtian Teachers with a deſire to learn their doctrine, whether they had attained to Regeneration thereby or no. And ſuch the Apoſtles had in Commiſſion to Baptize. From this Commiſſion of Chriſt then I argue thus. If

If our Lord Jesus commanded his Apostles to Baptize all that were Disciples, and thereby to bring them into the Church (as he did) then he commanded or authorised more to be brought into the Visible Church by the Baptismal Covenant, than were truly Regenerate. For men might be Disciples in an inferior sence, and were so, who yet were not Regenerate. Such Disciples had our Saviour himself. Such were those, who upon the *sight of his Miracles believed on him*, with whom yet he would *not trust himself, because he knew what was in them.* John 2. 23, 24. And such were those, *John* 6. 66. of whom it is said, *From that time many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* And such an Unregenerate Disciple was *Judas.* And such perhaps were *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and such was *Simon Magus*, and many other unprofitable branches, that by Baptism had been planted into Christ the true Vine.

And

And that our Saviour by Commiſſionating the Apoſtles to Baptize Diſciples, intended no leſs but that they ſhould Baptize all ſuch as were made or became Diſciples as ſuch, whether Regenerate or not; and that they could underſtand his Commiſſion no otherwiſe, our Saviours own practice and example will infer it. For tho he knew all men, and what was in them, and had declared in their hearing, that ſome of his Diſciples did not righty believe (*John* 6. 64.) yet did not reject thoſe as no Diſciples, whom he knew to be Unregenerate, ſo long as they followed him as Diſciples, but cauſed them to be Baptized as well as thoſe he knew to be better, as thoſe words imply, *John* 4. 1, 2. *When therefore the Lord knew how the Phariſees had heard that Jeſus made and Baptized more Diſciples than* John; *tho Jeſus himſelf Baptized not, but his Diſciples*, &c. Theſe words imply both, that he cauſed as many to be Baptized as were made Diſciples, and that there were great num-

numbers famed to be so made and Baptized. And yet so far, as appears there were but few of them that firmly cleaved to our Saviour till the last: For we read of but about an hundred and twenty Men and Women that appeared as his avowed Disciples after our Saviours Resurrection, till the day of Pentecost. *Act.* 1.

From all which, we may observe these two things.

1. That it was not disagreeable to our Saviours mind, that more should enter into Covenant with God by Baptism, and thereby be brought into the Visible Church, than were truly Regenerate: which is a further confirmation of our former argument.

2. That if the Apostles had known (as our Saviour did) those Disciples that offered themselves to Baptism, being Unregenerate, to be so; yet that would not have made it unlawful to admit them to Baptism, and into the Church, no more than what our Saviour caused to be done in like case, did. All

All this ſhews, that men were received by the Apoſtles into the Church, upon other terms than the reputation of their being of the Church as Inviſible, before they were ſo received.

3. My next Argument to prove that they were, and that our Saviour would have his Apoſtles to underſtand that they were to be received upon larger terms, I gather from our Saviours inſtructing his Apoſtles ſo thorowly, and ſo frequently as he did, that his Church would conſiſt of bad as well as good: which is alſo an argument that he did account ſuch to be a part and Members of his Viſible Church. Which we cannot think he would have done without cautioning them to look to it, and to take heed of letting ſuch into his Church; much leſs would he, on the contrary, have bid them compel men to come in, that his Houſe might be full, if he had deſigned that the Apoſtles ſhould keep all out of the Church, but ſuch of whoſe effectual converſion to God they were well ſatisfied.

Our Saviour by many Parables did thorowly inform his Apostles, that his Church would consist of a mixture of bad as well as good, of foolish as well as wise. Thus he told them, that the *Kingdom of Heaven should be likened unto ten Virgins, whereof five Wise and five Foolish,* Mat. 25. 1, 2. By the Kingdom of Heaven our Saviour in his Parables, and so in this, means the Kingdom of the Messias here on Earth, which is his Visible Church, in which he Reigns and Rules by his Gospel, as the Law of that Kingdom. And those are the People or Subjects of this Kingdom, who own him for their King, and his Gospel for the Law of his Kingdom. And the different effects which this Gospel was to have in the lives and behaviour of such as should receive it, was accordingly foretold by our Saviour, and resembled by various Parables, as it is here by the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

Thus we have it again in another Parable concerning the Marriage of a

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Kings Son, to which both good & bad were invited, and did come, and the Wedding was furniſhed with ſuch gueſts, *Mat.* 22.

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares that ſprang up amongſt it: The Parable of the Draw-net, that being caſt into the Sea, gathered of every kind, bad as well as good, are of the ſame import. And ſo is the Parable of the Sower and his Seed: Wherein four ſorts of Hearers or Profeſſors of the Goſpel are reſembled by four ſorts of ground, into which the Seed fell, of which there is but one thorowly good, *Mat.* 13.

Add unto this, that our Saviour did not only fore-tell his Apoſtles by theſe Parables, what different ſucceſs the Preaching of the Goſpel would meet with, even among thoſe that would receive it, and how his Church would be filled with many bad as well as good; but alſo told them plainly, without a Parable, *That many would be called, and yet but few choſen*, Mat. 20. 16.

Wherefore, and for what reason (may we conceive) did our Saviour thus instruct his Disciples, touching what the state and condition of his Church would be, which should be gathered by the Preaching of the Gospel? but that they might not be disappointed in their expectations, nor be offended when afterwards they should find it to consist of such a mixture; or ever expect (tho they should observe his rules for the purging his Church) to find it otherwise, until the end of the world, the time appointed for a total *gathering out of his Kingdom, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.*

And that the Apostles did not understand otherwise by our Saviours Parables and Doctrine, but that the worser as well as the better Christians were of this Kingdom of Heaven, the Visible Church, their Epistles to such Churches, in which there was such a mixture, shew; for they counted them, and treated them as Christian Brethren; in so much as St. *Paul* would

would not have ſuch as deſerved Church-cenſure, and in ſome ſort were under it, to be *counted as Enemies*, *but admoniſhed as Brethren*, 2 Theſ. 3. 14, 15.

The Apoſtles then being thus thorowly inſtructed by our Saviour afore-hand, touching the conſtitution of his Church of bad as well as good; it is no ways likely that they would receive none into the Church, but under the notion of ſuch as were truly Regenerate.

4. There are ſome circumſtances relating to the Apoſtles receiving Perſons into the Viſible Church by Baptiſm, which render it incredible that they did not ſo receive any, but upon the reputation and eſteem they had of being of the Church as Inviſible.

Firſt, one thing was the *doctrine* by which they moſt prevailed with men to become Diſciples. Which doctrine was the Preaching that pardon of ſin, and the happineſs of Eternal Life are to be had by Chriſts ſuffering for Sin-

ners, if they believe in him, and the Preaching to the People, that this Jesus rose from the Dead after his Enemies had put him to death, and confirming the truth of what they said by astonishing miracles. It's true, they did together with this, Preach the necessity of *Repentance also*: But the glad tidings of Pardon and Salvation by a Saviour so extraordinarily confirmed as it was, being *new*, and never heard of before, especially among the Gentiles, and being so hugely comfortable as it was, did so strongly affect the People, as made them instantly turn Disciples, and to promise, no doubt, a reformation of life, with an intent to perform, while they were thus filled with joy. But many of them after this transport of affection and newness of joy was over, tho they held fast the comfortable part of their profession of faith in Christ, and in his Death, yet proved partial and defective in reforming their lives, which rendred the work of Regeneration in them very doubtful at least, or rather worse than so. And

And the Apoſtles were fore-warned and pre-inſtructed by our Saviour, that upon their Preaching the joyful news which the Goſpel brings, many would be ſo taken with it, as readily and joyfully to become Diſciples, and turn Chriſtian in profeſſion, who yet would afterwards, when times of tryal came, either Apoſtatize and fall off, or foully faulter in retaining that profeſſion, by carnal ſhifts to ſecure themſelves from Perſecution. For our Saviour had told them this, by opening to them who or what manner of hearers he meant by thoſe reſembled in the Parable to the ſtony ground on which the Seed fell; and ſaid they were ſuch, as when they heard the word, would *immediately receive it with gladneſs*, but afterwards in time of temptation, would be offended, as not having root in themſelves, *Matt.* 4. 16.

All which conſidered, it was no ways probable that the Apoſtles received all they Baptized under the notion of Perſons already truly Rege-

nerate, but as Diſciples only, according to the tenour of their Commiſſion.

Secondly, another circumſtance is the *great haſt* the Apoſtles made to Baptize Perſons when once they had prevailed with them to conſent to it. *The ſame day* of Pentecoſt they Preached to thoſe mentioned, *Act.* 2. they Baptized about three thouſand of them. And ſo *Philip* Baptized the Eunuch *preſently* upon the Road, after *once* Preaching to him. And the Jaylor and all his were Baptized *ſtraight-way*, and *in the ſame hour of the night* in which *Paul* and *Silas* firſt Preached to them, *Act.* 16. 33. I think there can no inſtance be given of their delaying ſo much as four and twenty hours to Baptize any after they were willing to be Baptized.

This is another thing which renders it very incredible, that the Apoſtles Baptized none but upon account of their being eſteemed Regenerate, or that they did Baptize Perſons ordinarily by any other rule than that

that contained in the letter of their Commiſſion, which was to Baptize thoſe that were Diſciples, as ſuch. If they had thought it neceſſary to Baptize none but whom they could prudently eſteem to be of the Inviſible Church, they would in all likelihood have ſuſpended the Baptizing of many at leaſt, until they had had ſome tryal of the conſtancy of their reſolution, and experience of their reformation. And ſo much the rather, becauſe it is hard to make any good judgment of mens ſincerity by what they do on a ſudden under ſome tranſport of affection, and before they have had ſome time in cooler thoughts to deliberate upon what they engage to do.

Thirdly, their *refuſing none* that were willing to be Baptized, argues that they did not think none were to be Baptized before they were Regenerate, or did ſeem to be ſo. They refuſed none (ſo far as appears) that were willing to be Baptized, and to come into the Church, how notoriouſly

riously had soever they had been before. *Simon Magus* is a famous instance of this nature. And some were admitted into the Church by Baptism, before they had quite left off their Idolatrous worship. For *some with conscience of the Idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered to an Idol,* and their conscience being weak, is defiled, saith St. *Paul,* concerning some in the Church of *Corinth,* whom he afterwards admonisheth to flee from Idolatry, 1 *Cor.* 8. 7. & 10. 14.

Now if a judgment of mens being truly Regenerate had been the rule by which the Apostles and others had governed themselves in Baptizing of men, suspicion would hardly have suffered *Philip* to have Baptized such an one as *Simon* the Sorcerer without some considerable tryal of him. And considering what discerning men the Apostles were, it is very strange that they should discern none of those unfit to be Baptized whom yet they did Baptize, that were very bad before they were Baptized, and proved to be

be ſo ſtill ſhortly after: I ſay this would ſeem ſtrange, in caſe nothing leſs had qualified them for Baptiſm, than a reputation of their being Regenerate.

Theſe circumſtances conſidered, together with the plain rule the Apoſtles had in their Commiſſion, whom to Baptize, to wit, Diſciples as ſuch; it is more than probable that they governed themſelves by that rule, and Baptized thoſe they did Baptize under the notion of Diſciples, or ſuch as were learning to be Chriſtians, without tying themſelves to a judgment that they were already Regenerate.

5. Our bleſſed Saviour who does not judge according to outward appearance; but according to his certain knowledge of things, does account ſuch to be of his Viſible Church, whom yet he knows to be none of the Inviſible. This I gather from his own words, *John* 15. 2. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.* By which, he ſuppoſeth, and plainly

plainly intimates, that there would be many such branches *in him*, by being in his Visible Church, which yet being unfruitful, and to be taken away, are therefore not of the Invisible. For by their being *in him*, is doubtless meant of their being externally and visibly *united to him* as members of his body, the Church as Visible. And how can we conceive them to be united to him so as to be said to be *in him*, but by Covenanting with him in Baptism? For by that they are brought into him: *Baptized into Christ*, as St. *Paul* speaks, *Gal.* 3. 27. and *planted in him by Baptism*, Rom. 6. 5.

And upon the same account, and for the same reason for which our Saviour judgeth and accounteth men to be in him, to be of his Visible Church, we may, we must so account them likewise. The Scripture knoweth no other being in Christ, but by being united and related to him, either by external Covenanting with him, or by internal Renovation. In this latter

latter ſence, ſuch unfruitful branches as our Saviour ſpeaks of in the Text aforeſaid, are not in him: and therefore it muſt be underſtood in the former ſence, unleſs any third ſence of mens being in Chriſt can be found out in Scripture, which I never yet heard of.

6. Our bleſſed Saviour in the Primitive times owned ſuch to be of his Viſible Church as were not of the Inviſible, by pouring out upon them miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. That there were ſuch gifts poured out upon ſuch men as tho they did believe, yet not to the ſaving of the ſoul, is evident by our Saviours own words, *Mat.* 7. 22. *Many will ſay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Propheſied in thy name, and in thy name have caſt out Devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity.* And the Author to the *Hebrews* plainly ſuppoſes that ſuch as were *partakers of the Holy Ghoſt*, might

might be so bad as quite to fall away from the Christian profession, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6.

And that our Saviour by pouring out such gifts upon such men, did own them as related to him, and as Members of his Visible Church, will appear when we consider that the promise of these was made to such as should believe, and only to such, *Mark* 16. 17. *These signs shall follow those that believe: In my name shall they cast out Devils, they shall speak with new* tongues. By conferring upon such Believers, whose faith did not operate to Regeneration, he set his Seal upon them as mark'd for his in a visible relation. For the pouring out of miraculous gifts of the Spirit, is called the sealing of the Spirit. *After ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise*, Ephe. 1. 13.

There was a two-fold seal of the Spirit; the one by inward sanctification, or renewing men to the Image of God. Of this St. *Paul* seems to speak, 2 *Cor.* 1. 22. *Who hath sealed us, and given*

given the earneſt of the ſpirit in our hearts. This Sealing belongs to the Inviſible ſtate of the Church. But then there was a ſealing of the ſpirit which belonged then to the viſible ſtate of the Church, by which, a viſible mark or ſeal was ſet upon them, and by which God owned them as related to him as Members of his Viſible Church, and that was the conferring upon them ſome extraordinary or miraculous gifts. And this was common to thoſe that had but common grace, and were unregenerate, as well as to them that had ſpecial, as appears by the 7th. of *Mat.* and 6th. of *Heb.* fore-mentioned. Theſe extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt ſeem to be confined to the Viſible Church, 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. *God hath ſet in the Church, Apoſtles, Prophets and Teachers, then Miracles, gifts of Healing, diverſities of Tongues*; by which, thoſe that had them beſtowed upon them, were known to be of the Church, and to be owned by God to be ſo.

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The conferring miraculous gifts upon ſuch men as yet ſhall be rejected by Chriſt at laſt, as workers of iniquity, argues theſe things. Firſt, that they were Believers in Chriſt in a ſence, becauſe they wrought their Miracles in his Name, and by virtue of Faith in his Name: And becauſe our Saviour had ſaid that ſuch ſigns as they ſhew'd ſhould *follow them that believe*, Mark 16.17. Secondly, that they profeſſed the Chriſtian doctrine: for that miraculous power was conferred upon them for the confirmation of the doctrine they profeſſed and Preached. *The Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with ſigns following*, verſ. 20. Beſides, our Saviour brings them in pleading that they had Propheſied in his Name. Thirdly, they being Believers, Profeſſors and Preachers of the Chriſtian doctrine, it argues that they had been Baptized, and by Baptiſm made Members of the Viſible Church, and that our Saviour did own them for ſuch, by conferring on them ſuch extra-

traordinary gifts which he did not beſtow upon Unbelievers.

7. I might add in the laſt place, that our Saviour owns ſome bad men to be related to him as *his Servants*. Hence it is that he calls them *Servants*, tho *ſlothful Servants*, Mat. 25, 26. *unprofitable Servants*, verſ. 30. *evil Servants*, Mat. 24. 48. *wicked Servants*, chap. 18. 32. The title of Servants is given to ſuch as theſe, becauſe they are of the Houſhold of the great Lord and Maſter; that is, Members of his Viſible Church, which is his Houſe. And St. *Paul* ſaith, *in a great Houſe* (and ſo in the Church he means) *there are not only Veſſels of gold, and of ſilver, but alſo of wood and of earth, and ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour*, 2 Tim. 2. 20. And our Saviour hath ſaid, *that many ſhall come from the Eaſt and Weſt, and ſhall ſit down with* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob *in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the Children of the Kingdom ſhall be caſt out into outer darkneſs*, Mat. 8. 11, 12.

Having seen what evidence the holy Scriptures do afford to prove that God, that Christ himself does own others to be part of his Visible Church, than such as are of the Church as Invisible, I shall now proceed to take into consideration such Texts of Scripture as in the apprehension of some seem most to favour the contrary opinion.

I will begin with 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. *The like figure whereunto Baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience towards God, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.* Whence it is argued, that those who were received into the Church by Baptism, were always supposed such as had the answer of a good Conscience towards God, the inward qualification which answers the outward figure or sign in Baptism, Death unto sin, and a Resurrection unto a new life.

But the answer to this is very easie. The Apostle in these words was shewing what is necessary in the parties

ties Baptized, beſides their Baptiſm, to make their Baptiſm available to their ſalvation; but not what is neceſſary by way of condition to their being Baptized: this Text meddles not with that, ſo far as appears by any clauſe or circumſtance in it. And is much of the ſame nature, and much like to that of St. *Paul*, Rom. 2. 28, 29. where he ſaith, *That is not Circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh, but that which is of the heart and in the ſpirit.* By which, he does not mean that Circumciſion which was but outward in the fleſh, ſerved to no other ends, but to ſignifie Heart-circumciſion: for it did engage the Circumciſed in Covenant with God, and initiate them, and give them entrance into the Church, and made them partakers of the Oracles and Ordinances of God there, as he ſhews in the following words in the next Chapter: But his meaning was, that Circumciſion in the fleſh alone, without Circumciſion of the heart, would not avail to any mans having acceptance with God.

So here, that Baptism which consists in outward washing only, the putting away the filth of the flesh, will not save, will not avail to salvation without the answer of a good Conscience towards God. But then it does not follow, but that it may avail as well as Circumcision in the Letter did, to bring men into the Visible Church, and to procure them the benefit of the outward priviledges of it.

Another Text is, *John* 3. 5. *Except a man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* Some that are of the opinion which I am opposing, by the Kingdom of God here, understand the Church, as well Visible as Invisible, and then infer, that none can enter into the Church without being born of the Spirit as well as of Water.

But the answer to this is very easie. For if by Kingdom of God here, we understand either the Church as Invisible, or the Kingdom of glory, it is granted that men cannot enter in-

to the Kingdom of God except they be born of the Spirit. But then this does not at all oppoſe what I have been proving, *viz.* That Men may be, and many really are Members of the Viſible Church, and that in Gods account, who yet are none of the Inviſible Church by being born of the Spirit, or internally Regenerated.

And that by Kingdom of God here, cannot be meant the Viſible Church, is evident, becauſe many have entered into it, who yet have not been born of the Spirit, as I have, as I think, abundantly proved, againſt all reaſonable contradictions. Our Saviour we ſee ſpeaks here of a being *born of Water*, and of a being *born of the Spirit*, which are two diſtinct things. And there are many that have been born of Water, and thereby entered into the Viſible Church, that have never been born of the Spirit. And there are many alſo that have entered into the Viſible Church by being born of Water, who have been born of the Spirit, but not till afterwards,

not till ſome time after they have been in the Viſible Church. We muſt ſuppoſe this, or elſe ſay there is no poſſibility of effectual converſion in the Viſible Church; which is a thing ſo abſurd to imagine, and ſo much againſt all experience, as that no man, I think, has the heart to aſſert it, which yet muſt be aſſerted if the other be denied.

It is further alledged from thoſe words, *Tit.* 3. 5. *According to his mercy he ſaved us by the waſhing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.* I ſay it is hence alledged, that ſince Baptiſm is called the waſhing of Regeneration, that therefore thoſe who are admitted to Baptiſm, muſt be ſuppoſed to be Regenerated before or in Baptiſm.

Anſwer. This follows not, ſince Baptiſm may be called the waſhing of Regeneration for another reaſon, and in another reſpect more probable, and that is, becauſe men by Covenant are engaged to become new men, and to lead new lives. And it is from this engage-

engagement by Baptiſm that St. *Paul* ſo often exhorts and perſuades Chriſtians to mortification and a new life, as we ſee he does, *Rom* 6. 2, 3 4, 5, 6. *Col.* 2. 12. & 3. 1, 2. As *John* the Baptiſt Baptized the People *unto Repentance*, Mat. 3. 11. So they are Baptized *unto* Regeneration; that is, they are thereby brought under a ſolemn engagement to repent, and ſo to be Regenerate. And in this reſpect Baptiſm is properly enough called the Laver of Regeneration. Not that Baptiſm does inwardly Regenerate by the act done or ſuffered to be done, tho it does engage to it; but it is the work of the Holy Ghoſt as the principal agent, and therefore is here called the Renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.

And its evident that the waſhing of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the Holy Ghoſt are here mentioned as two different things, as they are in their own nature. Altho the Chriſtians here ſpoken of, were ſaid to be ſaved according to Gods mercy by

both, yet it no ways follows that this end could not be attained, unleſs they were renewed by the Holy Ghoſt at the ſame inſtant in which they were Baptized, for the one might ſucceed the other in point of time, as often it hath done. And if ſo, there can no neceſſity be inferred from hence of not admitting men to the one, but upon ſuppoſition of their being already qualified with the other.

It is true, men by Baptiſm it ſelf are brought into a new ſtate externally; they are brought into a new relation to God, to Chriſt, and to the Church his body, and to new enjoyments alſo in the Church. And it is to be noted our Saviour calls Baptiſm, a being born of *Water*, as a birth diſtinct from that of being born of the *Spirit*. Our Saviour in that diſcourſe of his with *Nicodemus* about Baptiſm, and being born again, ſeems to allude to the Jews cuſtom of receiving *Proſelytes* by Baptiſm as well as by Circumciſion, who did reckon they were there-

thereby born again as it were, and brought into a new ſtate of life, as is well known by the tenour of the writings of the Jewiſh Doctors. And altho by being born of Water, men may be ſaid to be born of the Spirit in one ſence, for they are Baptized into the Name of the Holy Ghoſt, as well as into the Name of the Father and the Son: and *by one ſpirit we are all Baptized into one body*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. Yet in a higher and more emphatical ſence, all that are born of the Spirit, are not ſo born when they are Baptized, but moſt of them afterwards, as the experience of the Church doth abundantly manifeſt.

Again, another Scripture is *Act.* 2. 38. *Repent and be Baptized every one of you, in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, for the remiſſion of ſins.* Now it may be ſome will argue hence, that ſince Baptiſm is enjoyned in order to the obtaining of remiſſion of ſins: and ſince Baptiſm alone without Repentance here required with it, will not

avail

vail for the obtaining such remission, that therefore a being Baptized for the remission of sins, always supposes Repentance in him that is Baptized.

Answer. The most that can be inferred hence, is, that Baptism as well as Repentance, and Repentance as well as Baptism are directed to, and enjoyned in order to the obtaining Remission of sins; but not that such Repentance as is available to this end, is enjoyned as *the condition* of being Baptized, and by that to be received into the Church. Tho I deny not, but that in the adult a profession of sorrow for sin past, and a promise of amendment for time to come, was always required before Baptism, but sorrow for sin alone, avails not to the obtaining of remission of sin, and what the promise of amendment for the future would prove, was uncertain to those who received Persons into the Church by Baptism. The Apostles, we may well suppose, received such raw Disciples to Baptism, as those were to whom this counsel

was

was here given, upon like terms that *John* the Baptiſt received the multitudes that flock'd to him for Baptiſm; *and they were Baptized, confeſſing their ſins:* They confeſſed themſelves ſuch ſinners as needed amendment, and profeſſed ſorrow for what was paſt; and by receiving Baptiſm, engaged themſelves to amend for time to come, and accordingly he is ſaid to Baptize them *unto Repentance*, Mat. 3. 11. But very many of them fell ſhort afterwards of performing their engagement, *John* 5. 35. Baptiſm and Repentance as ſaving are not inſeparable in point of time, in reference to the obtaining Remiſſion of ſin. If a man do effectually repent, tho it be not till long after he is Baptized, yet his Baptiſm and Repentance will be effectual for the obtaining Remiſſion of ſins. And if ſo, then ſuch Repentance as is ſaving, is not of neceſſity before Baptiſm, to the obtaining of Remiſſion of ſins.

But the truth is, if we will infer any thing from the Text under conſideration,

deration, in reference to our preſent enquiry, it may be that which is ſo far from proving mens Viſible Church-Membership to depend upon the credibility and reputation of their being of the Church as Inviſible, as that it will much rather prove the direct contrary, *viz.* That the credibility of mens being of the Church as Inviſible, depends upon their being of the Church as Viſible. For it tends to prove that men living under the Goſpel (and others I meddle not with in this matter) cannot approve themſelves to be Members of the Inviſible Church, until they are firſt made Members of the Viſible by Baptiſm. For we ſee men are as well to be Baptized for the Remiſſion of ſin, as to repent to obtain it: As the promiſe of being ſaved is elſewhere made unto a being Baptized, as well as it is to believing (*He that believeth and is Baptized ſhall be ſaved*, Mark 16. 16.) And if ſo, then a man cannot be concluded to be in a pardoned ſtate, that through his own default is not Baptized, by which

which he ſhould be made of the Viſible Church: and if he cannot be concluded to be in a pardoned ſtate without this, then he cannot be duly reputed to be in the Inviſible Church-ſtate, becauſe there are none in that Church-ſtate but what are pardoned.

If any ſhould alledge the words of St. *Paul*, *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new Creature*, (2 Cor. 5. 17.) and infer that none are by Baptiſm, or otherwiſe in Chriſt, but what are new Creatures, the anſwer to them is this:

If by any mans being in Chriſt, be underſtood of ſuch a being in him as is ſaving, then he is indeed a new Creature, and truly Regenerate. But then that is ſuch a being in Chriſt as is not viſible to men, and therefore does not belong to our preſent inquiry. But if you read the words according to the Margent, If any man be in Chriſt, *let him be a new Creature*, then this Text does not infer, that if men be in Chriſt they are new Creatures.

tures, but that they ought to be so, according to their Covenant-ingagement, when they were planted into him by Baptism, *Act.* 2. 37. It is likewise urged to prove that a true saving faith, such as makes men Members of the Church as Invisible, is required as necessary to qualifie them for Baptism and Visible Church-Membership. For when the Eunuch said to *Philip, Here is Water, what doth hinder me to be Baptized? Philip* said unto him, *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,* And he answered and said, *I believe that Christ is the Son of God.* Here *Philip* seems to make a believing with all the heart, to be the *condition* of admitting the Eunuch to Baptism; and what less can a believing with all the heart be, than a true saving faith?

To which I answer thus: That the Apostles and Evangelists, such as *Philip* was, did indeed suppose and expect a faith in Christ, in all adult Persons whom they Baptized into him, is not to be doubted. Nor is it

is it to be doubted, but that they preſs'd and perſuaded them to be very hearty and ſerious in their undertaking the Chriſtian profeſſion when they Baptized them into it; and ſo did *Philip* here. But yet we ſee that for all that, *Philip* Baptized this Eunuch upon his bare profeſſing that he believed Jeſus Chriſt to be the Son of God; tho he did not ſay that he believed with all his heart. And upon like terms we may ſuppoſe he had Baptized *Simon Magus* a little before, *verſ.* 13. concerning whom the Scripture tells us, not only that he ſaid he believed, as it does here of the Eunuch, but that he did indeed believe. *Then* Simon *himſelf alſo believed*, ſaith the Text. And ſo did thoſe mentioned, *John* 2. 23. and ſo did thoſe who were likened to the Stony ground; for they *believed for a time*, but after fell away, *Luk.* 8. 13. *And many among the chief Rulers alſo believed on Chriſt*, who yet would *not confeſs him*, John 12. 42. So that when men are ſaid to believe in Chriſt, it does not always

always and necessarily imply a saving faith, or a new birth, or an Invisible Church-state. Men might and did believe in Christ before they were Baptized, who yet we cannot say were Regenerate by their believing, or in the Invisible Church-state; as *Simon Magus* for instance: And yet such believing, or professing to believe, qualified them for Baptism.

And when *Philip* here required of the Eunuch a believing with all his heart, in order to his being Baptized; we cannot reasonably think that he meant more thereby (if he proposed it as a *condition* of his being Baptized) then that he should *be serious and real* in it, in opposition to *dissembling*. For that was as much as we can reasonably think the Eunuch was then capable of knowing concerning himself, and therefore no more could be expected from him.

But then such a believing with all the heart, could be no argument from which it could be concluded that therefore either he, or any other in his

his or lower circumſtances that did ſo believe, were therefore ſavingly Regenerate. For it may very rationally be preſumed that *all* generally, who in the firſt times of the Goſpel, made profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, in order to their being Baptized, tho many of them Unregenerate, yet did really believe in Chriſt more or leſs. For what reaſon is it imaginable that they ſhould diſſemble when they profeſs'd faith in Chriſt, as the Son of God, in order to their being Baptized and received into the Church, when yet as the times were then, they could have no worldly advantage in proſpect, as a motive for them to diſſemble, and to profeſs and ſay they did believe what they *knew* they did not believe?

And that ſuch a believing as is real, and not diſſembled, may be ſaid to be a believing *with all the heart*, tho it proceed not from, nor is accompanied with a principle of regeneration or ſincerity in a moral ſence, will be yet rendred the more credible, if we

consider what the Scripture says in a case not much unlike this under consideration. It is said of *all Juda*, and *Benjamin*, and of the Strangers out of *Ephraim*, *Manasseth*, and *Simeon*, that they *entered into Covenant with an Oath, to seek the Lord God of their Fathers, with all their heart, and with all their soul*, 2 Chron. 15. 12. And it's said again at the 15th. vers. *That all* Juda *rejoyced at the Oath; for they had sworn with all their heart.* Now this Covenant and Oath entred into, was to engage them to worship the true God only, in opposition to their worshipping of strange Gods, in which many of them had been tardy, till *Asa* the King set upon this work of Reformation, as we may see, *chap.* 14. 3.

And when it's said that *all Juda* did thus Covenant and Swear *with all their heart* to seek the Lord God of their Fathers, it can in reason import no more in reference to many of them, than to signifie that they did not *dissemble* in doing it, but that there

there was really the conſent of their minds concurring with their verbal engagement by Covenant and Oath. For no conſidering man will think that this Covenanting by *all* the men of *Juda*, without limitation or exception, could proceed from an inward principle of Regeneration or Spiritual life in reference to *all* of them; and yet they are *all* ſaid to do it, and with all their heart. And if not, then the Covenanting with all the heart of ſuch of them as had no principle of ſpiritual life, muſt be underſtood of their doing it really, and without diſſembling the matter.

I alledge all this to ſhow, that men may do things with all their heart in Religion, when yet what they ſo do, does not proceed from any principle of Regeneration, or a divine life. And if they may, then we cannot conclude, that tho *Philip* ſhould be underſtood to require a believing with all the heart, as a conditional qualification for Baptiſm, that therefore he required ſuch a faith, as by

which a man must necessarily be Regenerate before he may duly desire Baptism.

And the truth is, it is not to be imagined that such raw Disciples as were generally Baptized, and of such short standing as to be Baptized the same day, and sometimes near the same hour, in which they were first instructed in the Christian doctrin, could be able to know before they were Baptized, that they did indeed savingly believe; and if not, it could not be reasonable to require the knowledge of such a thing concerning themselves, as a condition of their desiring or requiring Baptism.

Men may easily know their own minds, whether they do believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God or no, and so may be able to profess without dissimulation, that they do believe that he is, when they do indeed believe so. But because many that did in those times, and do in these believe in Jesus Christ as sent of God, and as the Son of God, who yet were not

then,

then, nor are now truly renew'd by it in heart and life, therefore no man can ordinarily ſatisfie himſelf touching the ſoundneſs and ſavingneſs of his faith, but by ſome competent time of trial and experience of the life and power of it, by its effects in purifying the heart and life, and overcoming the world, and working by love. We underſtand by St. *James* and other Writers of the holy Scriptures, that there were many, who knowing that they did believe, yet unduly promiſed themſelves juſtification and ſalvation from ſuch their believing, when yet it was not accompanied with ſuch works of a good and holy life, as by which faith is made perfect. And many ſuch there are, as is juſtly to be feared, now in our days. Theſe men deceived themſelves, they *deceived their own hearts*, as St. *James* expreſſeth it: but not in thinking they did believe, for they knew they did, but in perſuading themſelves that their faith was ſufficient to ſalvation, when yet it was but a *dead and*

barren faith, not producing the fruits of a truly Christian temper and conversation.

Now it was upon the believing Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, or the Messiah, or he by whom alone salvation is to be had, and an undissembled profession of this belief, that qualifies men for Baptism, however it proved afterwards as to the efficacy of its operation. And this real undissembled belief, was that, I doubt not, which *Philip* required of the Eunuch, when he said, *If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayst be Baptized.* And the Eunuchs answer, upon which he was Baptized by *Philip*, does intimate so much, when he only said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And more than this I conceive, cannot be duly inferred from those words of *Philip* to the Eunuch, for the reasons I have already given.

These are the principal Texts made use of to countenance the opinion which I have in this Inquiry opposed.

There

There are objections or pleas drawn from ſome other, which are well anſwered by Mr. *Thomas Lamb*, as ſome of theſe I have inſiſted on alſo are, in his *freſh ſuit againſt Independency.*

And thus upon our Inquiry we have found as I conceive, that others are of the Viſible Church in Scripture account, and ſo in God's account, by whoſe inſpiration the Scriptures were written, than thoſe which are of the Church as Inviſible, or them that ſeem to be ſo. For Almighty God, as has been ſhown, accounteth and owneth ſuch to be his People in diſtinction from the reſt of the world, that have entered into Covenant with him, tho otherwiſe they or many of them, are far from ſeeming to be of the Church as Inviſible. And if God eſteem of them as ſuch, then ſo muſt his Servants likewiſe: and if the Scripture account them ſuch, it will become us to do ſo too, who profeſs to make the holy Scriptures the rule of our judgment.

After that, upon our Inquiry we have found things thus; Let not any man now say, that by this doctrine we confound the Kingdom of the Devil with the Kingdom of God. For this would but reflect after an unseemly manner upon the wisdom of God for thus numbering bad men as well as good to be of his Visible Church, as externally related to him, and as worshippers of him. Secret Hypocrites belong to the Kingdom of the Devil, as well as those that are more visibly such; and yet none deny but that many such are in the Visible Church, nor do they count this a confounding Gods Kingdom with the Devils.

There is no doubt but that the Devil has his Visible and Invisible Kingdom as well as God has his. But those Hypocrites, whether secret or more open, which are of the Visible Church, tho they are in a sence of the Kingdom of the Devil, yet must be reckoned to be not of his Visible, but of his Invisible Kingdom. So

that

that the Hypotheſis I ſeek to eſtabliſh, does not at all tend to confound Gods viſible Kingdom, and the Devils viſible Kingdom one with another, much leſs their Inviſible Kingdoms.

For thoſe are not in Scripture reckoned to be of the Viſible Kingdom of the Devil, who profeſſedly worſhip the true God, and him only, and Jeſus Chriſt as his Son and only Mediator, tho otherwiſe bad: But ſuch as worſhip Idols, other gods, and other mediators, in doing of which, they do in effect worſhip the Devil, who is the founder of ſuch worſhip.

Thoſe Kingdoms or Nations are in Scripture counted of the Devils Kingdom or Dominion, in which his Worſhip and Ordinances (Idol-worſhip, and the Rites of that worſhip) are eſtabliſhed by publick Authority, as the Religion of thoſe Nations. As on the contrary, thoſe Nations or Kingdoms are counted Gods Kingdoms, in which the Word and Worſhip of God are by publick Authority

owned

owned and eſtabliſhed as the Religion of thoſe Nations. Thus when Idol worſhip was put down, and caſt out of the ſeveral Territories of the Roman Empire by the firſt Chriſtian Emperors, and the Chriſtian Religion eſtabliſhed by publick Authority, as the Religion of thoſe Nations, then the Devil was ſaid to be *caſt down*, and *the Kingdom of God, and the power of his Chriſt, to be come*, Rev. 12. 9, 10. And again, *The Kingdoms of this world* are ſaid to *become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt*: When Idol-worſhip which is Deviliſh worſhip, is rejected by the Authority of thoſe Kingdoms, *Revel.* 11. 15. Not that there ſhall be no Hypocrites or Carnal Profeſſors of Chriſtianity in theſe Kingdoms, when they are thus become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt: But tho there be, yet ſo long as the true Chriſtian doctrine and worſhip is owned and eſtabliſhed by the Government or ruling power of thoſe Kingdoms; and ſo long as the generality of the Inha-

Inhabitants are for the ſame doctrine and worſhip in oppoſition to Idolatrous and Antichriſtian doctrine and worſhip, they are accounted to belong to Gods Viſible Kingdom in the world, and not the Devils, however many of thoſe Inhabitants may belong to the Inviſible Kingdom of the Devil. And thus thoſe are called the *Children of Gods Kingdom* by our Saviour, who yet at laſt ſhall be *caſt out into outer darkneſs*, Mat. 8. 12. But of this more afterwards.

QUERY IX.

Whether God hath granted any right to Church-priviledges, to thoſe who are only of the Church as Viſible, but not as Inviſible?

That ſuch have right to them *before men*, unleſs they are juſtly deprived of them by Church-cenſures, thoſe will grant who yet deny that they

they have any right to them *by Gods allowance.* But our preſent enquiry is, whether they have any right by Gods allowance? And if that be true, which we now ſuppoſe we found to be ſo in our former enquiry, *viz.* that God himſelf doth own very many ſuch to be of the Church as Viſible, which yet are not at all of it as Inviſible; then it will be but reaſonable to conclude from thence, that he does allow them a ſhare in the external and temporary priviledges of that relation, except in thoſe caſes wherein he himſelf hath made an exception: For otherwiſe God by conferring on them the priviledge of Relation to himſelf and his Church, has conferred upon them a right to the priviledges of that relation, ſo far as the relation it ſelf extends. For the relation and the priviledges of the relation go together, except in caſe of forfeiture by miſcarriage. The union of parts does of it ſelf infer right to communion with them in things common to the whole,

The

The right of thoſe in the Viſible Church, to Viſible Church-priviledges, does ariſe I conceive from that Covenanting between God and them in Baptiſm, by which they engaged themſelves to be his People, as God on the other hand had engaged himſelf to be their God on that condition.

Now for ought that appears from the Scriptures to the contrary, ſo far as they perform Covenant with God, in being a People unto him, ſo far he owns them to be his People; and ſo far as he does ſo, he allows them the priviledge of his People, which is a ſhare in his houſhold fare, and in the proviſions for his Family, which are his Word and Ordinances. If they worſhip no other God, and *hold the Head* Chriſt Jeſus in point of doctrine and worſhip, and own his doctrine and precepts as the rule of faith and life, and worſhip God in his Ordinances, and have the form of godlineſs, tho otherwiſe deſtitute of the power of it; yet as they are thus far

a

a People unto God, so God so far owns them as a People unto him, separated unto him from the Idolatrous and Infidel world, and accordingly allows them an interest and share in the external priviledges of his People, of which communion in his Word and Ordinances is the chief. Only where God himself hath put a *bar* to this enjoyment, there the Visible Church ought to do so too, as in those cases wherein deprivation by Church-censures is enjoyned. Right to the priviledges of the Church, comes in by mens relation to it as parts or members of it: and so long as the relation continues, so long a right to the external priviledges continues, except in the case before excepted. Those that are related to the Church, both as Visible and Invisible, have a right from God to Church priviledges both external, internal, and eternal: but those who are related to the Church only externally as it is Visible, have right only to the external priviledges of it.

Thus

Thus far we have argued from the nature and reaſon of the ſubject under conſideration. Come we now to enquire what the uſage of the Church has been as to point of fact in this matter, as we have it recorded in Scripture. And as for the Old Teſtament Church, the whole Nation of the Jews that entred into Covenant with God to be his People, were allowed their part and ſhare in the Ordinances of publick worſhip, and not only ſo, but were commanded before them, ſave in ſome exceptions; as while they were under any legal uncleannes, and in thoſe particular caſes of guilt, for which they were to be deprived of their lives as well as communion, and to be cut off from among the People. Three times in the year were all their Males to appear before the Lord to keep three ſolemn Feaſts appointed: and yet I think no body will imagine them to be all without exception of the Church as Inviſible.

And

And when any Strangers from among the Gentiles had a mind to turn Proſelytes to the Jews Religion, all that was required of them, to make them capable of communion in the Paſſover, was but to Circumciſe all their Males, by which they entred into Covenant with God, *Exod.* 12. 48.

And ſince it was thus in the old Teſtament Church, it is not to be imagined that the terms of external communion ſhould be more rigorous and ſevere in the new, ſince our Saviours *yoke is eaſie, and his burden light*, in compariſon of that among the Jews, which was a yoke as St. *Peter* ſpeaks, *which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear.* All the ſame adult Perſons which were received into the Church by Baptiſm, were admitted to communion of the Church in the Ordinances of worſhip. Thus it was in the firſt Chriſtian Church, which was a pattern to all that followed, *Act.* 2. 41, 42. When the three thouſand were added to the Church by Baptiſm;

Baptiſm; *They continued in the Apoſtles Doctrine, and in breaking of bread and prayer*, Acts 2. 42

And St. *Paul* ſaith, *By one ſpirit we are all baptized into one body whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one ſpirit.* The ſame *all* we ſee were made to drink into one ſpirit, which were baptized into one body, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. By drinking into one ſpirit, is meant Communion in the Lords Supper, according to the ſenſe of all Interpreters that I have met with. Again, he had ſaid thus, *Chap.* 10. 17. *We being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of one bread.* Here again the ſame *all* that made one body, were partakers of one bread. So that the extent of the Communion of the parts, equallized the union of the whole.

Nor indeed is there any one inſtance in Scripture that I can find, of any one perſon that has been refuſed Communion with a Chriſtian Church when he has deſired it, who has been

before received into the Church by Baptiſm, except ſuch as have been under Cenſure of the Church for ſome Capital Offence. And ſuch indeed are to be excluded (until brought to repentance) by the Eccleſiaſtical Government under which they live. And St. *Paul* has given direction in what manner of Caſes, and for what manner of Offences men are to be proceeded againſt by Church Cenſure greater or leſſer, after due admonition otherwiſe uſed. *But now* (ſaith he) *I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with ſuch an one, no not to eat*, 1 Cor. 5. 11. For theſe and ſuch like Crimes, a Church may, and ought in her governing capacity, to deny her Communion with perſons guilty of them, after due admonition. And accordingly our Church has ordered publick admonition frequently to be made in theſe words with many other. *If any of you be a blaſphemer*

of

of God, a hinderer or ſlanderer of his Word, an Adulterer, or be in malice, or envy, or in any other grievous crime; Repent you of your ſins, or elſe come not to that holy Table, leſt after the taking of that holy Sacrament, the Devil enter into you, as he did into Judas, *and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to deſtruction both of body and ſoul.* And further, *If any that deſire to communicate be an open and notorious evil Liver, or have done any wrong to his Neighbour, by word or deed, ſo that the Congregation be thereby offended; the Curate having knowledge thereof, ſhall call him and advertiſe him, that in any wiſe he preſume not to come to the Lords Table until he hath openly declared himſelf to have truly repented and amended his former naughty life, that the Congregation may thereby be ſatisfied, which before were offended. The ſame order ſhall the Curate uſe with thoſe betwixt whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign, not ſuffering them to be partakers of the Lords Table, until he know them to be reconciled.*

I know there are ſeveral things wont to be alledged againſt admitting ſuch to the Lords Supper who have not ſaving Grace; as,

1. That ſuch will but increaſe their ſin, and further their Damnation by partaking of it, ſo long as they are unregenerate. To which it may be Anſwered, (1.) That ſuch would no leſs ſin by neglecting to Obey Chriſts Command, *Do this in remembrance of me*, and in neglecting to prepare themſelves for it, than they do when they come to this Supper of our Lord unprepared, but rather indeed more. For by not coming they make themſelves guilty of a double Diſobedience; the one in not doing what Chriſt has Commanded to be done in remembrance of him; the other in not preparing to do it after a right manner, whereas by coming unprepared, they make themſelves guilty but of one of them. (2.) For the ſame reaſon Men ſhould not Pray while unregenerate, as not come to the Sacrament while they are

ſo.

ſo. For they are required to do both the one and the other in a right manner, as well as to do them at all. But yet no judicious Man will ſay, that all unregenerate Men ought to reſtrain Prayer before God, or to be reſtrained from it. For it is poſſible, and to be hoped, that their Praying may have that good effect upon them as to make them better: And the ſame may be ſaid of ſuch mens coming to the Sacrament. (3.) Though the Scripture directs that by Church-Cenſure Men ſhould be debarr'd from the Sacrament for open Acts of Scandal, yet I know not where it directs to keep them from it for want of ſaving Grace, ſo long as not guilty of ſuch Scandal.

2. *Obj.* It is again Objected, that this Ordinance is appointed for the *Confirmation* of the Converted, but not for the *Converſion* of the unconverted.

Anſwer. I grant indeed that this Sacrament is not appointed for mens firſt Converſion to Chriſtianity, or for

unbaptized Perſons: But yet it may be very uſeful together with other means, to carry on the work of Converſion from common Grace to ſpecial: And yet ſuch is the Converſion generally which is wrought in ſuch as are Educated in the Chriſtian Religion. The uſe of this Sacrament in conjunction with Chriſtian Doctrine, may very well contribute its ſhare in carrying on this progreſſive change in Men by improving common Grace into ſpecial. *The Preaching of the Croſs is to us who are ſaved, the Power of God to Salvation*, ſaith St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 18. And Chriſt as Crucified, is by the Lords Supper Preached to the *ſeeing* of the Eye, as well as by Word and Doctrine he is Preached to the *hearing* of the Ear: And *the Eye affecteth the Heart*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, as well as the Ear: And therefore the one may help on the work of Converſion from common Grace to ſpecial, as well as the other. And in all likelyhood it often does ſo, as we have

have reaſon to think when we ſee Men who as may be feared have no more than common Grace, upon occaſion of their going to the Sacrament, to become more ſerious both before and after, than uſually they are at other times. And if ſuch would but frequent it often, it might well be hoped that it would work a great alteration in them, by making them often more ſerious and conſiderate about the things of their Souls. And indeed what is more likely to beget a love to our Bleſſed Saviour, than ſuch a lively repreſentation of his wonderful love in dying for us, as is made in the Celebration of that Sacrament?

3. *Obj.* The giving this Sacrament to ſuch as by a ſaving Faith are not in Covenant with God, is but like ſetting a Seal unto a Blank. To which it is anſwered,

Firſt, That this Sacrament is not a Seal of Mans Faith, but of Gods Covenant; and the Seal that is ſet to that, is not ſet to a Blank. The Lords

Supper is not a Seal to aſſure ſuch as receive it, that they have Faith, but to aſſure them of Gods Faithfulneſs in his Covenant, and to work in them a confidence in that. Circumciſion, which was a Seal of the Covenant, was not ſet to a blank when applyed to Children before they had Faith.

Secondly, though this Sacrament be indeed a Seal of Gods Covenant directly, yet it muſt be acknowledged that the end and deſign of its being ſo, is to help Mens Faith in Gods Faithfulneſs and Goodneſs in reference to what he has promiſed in his Covenant. But then though this be ſo, yet the giving this Sacrament to ſuch who have but common Faith, cannot be ſaid to be like ſetting a Seal to a blank; becauſe a common Faith ſuch as unregenerate Men may have, is more than no Faith at all, and yet it is the having no Faith at all, which can only anſwer to the ſetting a Seal to a blank in this caſe. For a common Faith may be improved until it become ſpecial, as I have ſhewed;

ſhewed; and upon that account this Sacrament being a Sacrament for Mens improvement in Faith and Love, may as well belong to them who have but common Faith as to thoſe whoſe Faith is ſpecial and ſaving. And indeed what is more likely to make a Faith which is but dull and unactive, as a common Faith is, to become lively and vigorous, than that which with great Advantage is to this end, repreſented to the Mind in this Sacrament? as I ſaid before.

Thirdly, I might add, that the Covenant made in Baptiſm, is Recognized and renewed in the uſe of the Lords Supper; and this doubtleſs may be done by ſuch as have but common Faith, as well as by thoſe who have that which is ſpecial and ſaving.

4 *Obj.* The ſaying of St. *Paul* in 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*, is alledged againſt mens being admitted or preſuming to come to the Lords Supper who have not ſaving Grace, though

though otherwiſe free from Scandalous Offences. They ſuppoſe Saving Grace, Repentance, Faith, and Love, to be the Matter about which the Apoſtle would have Men to examine themſelves, as neceſſary to qualifie them for *Lawful* Communion in that Sacrament.

Now that for Men to examine themſelves whether they have ſaving Grace or no, is very neceſſary for their Preparation for coming to the Sacrament, is granted; becauſe thereby they will the better come to know the ſtate of their own Souls, and what it is that hinders their *aſſurance* of having ſuch Grace, and the neceſſity of removing it, and their need of ſuch a Saviour as he is whoſe Love they are to commemorate in that Sacrament. And God forbid that I ſhould in the leaſt encourage any to neglect the beſt Preparation they can make for ſo concerning a buſineſs as the approaching to the Table of the Lord is. And except by examination they can find in themſelves ſome knowledge and

and belief that Chriſt Jeſus is the Saviour of Sinners, by dying for them, and of the Nature and End of this Sacrament in general; I do not underſtand how they ſhould receive any benefit by coming to it.

But to conclude from this ſaying of the Apoſtle, that Men are to forbear coming to the Table of the Lord, until by ſelf-examination they can ſatisfie themſelves that they have ſaving Grace, I think to be more than ever the Apoſtle intended in thoſe words. For ſuch ſatisfaction and aſſurance is hardly attainable while Chriſtians are but weak and unexperienced, though known to God to be ſincere. And for this cauſe it ſeems to be more than is fit to be impoſed upon Men as a *condition* of their coming to the Lords Supper.

But by the reaſon which St. *Paul* gives in verſe 29. why he would have Men to examine themſelves before they eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup, it appears that the thing in ſpecial and in particular concerning which

which he would have them examine themselves, was about their Capacity of *discerning the Lords Body* in doing it. For he tells them that if they did not discern the Lords Body in eating that Bread, &c. they would eat and drink *unworthily*, and likewise *Judgment* to themselves.

For our better understanding the scope and meaning of St. *Paul* in this his Discourse touching unworthy Communicating at the Lords Table, we will enquire alittle, what he means by eating and drinking *unworthily*; what by not *discerning the Lords Body*; and what by being *guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.*

1. The *unworthy* eating of that Bread, and drinking that Cup of the Lord, of which the Apostle speaks, signifies the receiving those Sacred Symbols of Christs Body and Blood, with a frame of Mind incongruous and unsuitable to the nature of that Feast, and to a participation of it: Or it is a receiving those Consecrated

Elements

Elements with ſuch an unſuitable Mind as makes Men uncapable of receiving that benefit which our Lord deſigned to be received by the uſe of that Ordinance.

2. Not to *diſcern the Lords Body* in eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup, is, not to underſtand the Nature of that Ordinance, nor our Lords deſign in it; nor to be ſutably affected with the Spiritual Nature and meaning of it.

Firſt, it is not to underſtand the Nature and End of that Ordinance. As when Men do not underſtand that the breaking the Lords Body upon the Croſs, and the ſhedding of his Blood as an Expiatory Sacrifice for the ſin of the World, is ſignified, repreſented, and commemorated by the breaking of Bread, and pouring out of Wine in that Sacrament. And when they do not underſtand or diſcern that this Ordinance was appointed by our Bleſſed Saviour, for a perpetual Commemoration of his tranſcendent Love in dying for us.

Now,

Now, if no more than this should be meant by not discerning the Lords Body, Men of common Illumination in the things of the Gospel, and by a common Faith concerning them, may undoubtedly escape being guilty of this unworthiness in eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup. For it will not be denyed but that many unregenerate Men may in this sense discern the Lords Body more clearly, and more distinctly, than many of the Regenerate themselves can.

And if, Secondly, by not discerning the Lords Body should be also meant (as I suppose it is) the unsuitableness of Mens Affection to the Spiritual Nature of the things represented by eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup; yet Men by common Grace may in some measure discern the Lords Body, by having some degree of Affection suitable to the Spiritual Nature and Design of that Ordinance. In the sense now under consideration, Men do not discern the Lords Body in receiving this Sacra-

Sacrament, when they are no more Affected with Love and Gratitude to our Bleſſed Saviour for his great Love in dying for us, than as if there had never been any ſuch thing ſuffered by him, and for ſuch an end as the Redemption of the World.

But now Men who have but *Initial* Faith and common Grace, may eat that Bread, and drink that Cup of the Lord with a much more ſutable frame of Mind and Affection, than this comes to. For they may at ſuch a time, and upon ſuch an Occaſion, have ſome ſenſe of Chriſts Love upon their Minds in dying for them, and ſome hope of being ſaved by his Death; and for that reaſon they may have ſome degree of Love and Affection to him ſtirring in them, even ſuch as may draw ſome grateful acknowledgment of his Love from them, and ſome preſent purpoſes of Living more to him, ſuch as may cauſe them to ſin leſs, until that ſenſe is worn off. When our Saviour ſaith, *He that loveth Father or Mother more than*

than me, is not worthy of me, Mat. 10. 37. He supposeth some may Love him to a degree, who yet love somewhat else more, and thereby make themselves unworthy of the Salvation which is by him.

Now, such a sense of Christs Love as this which Men but of common Grace may have at their coming to the Sacrament, has a very fair tendency in it towards such a sense and such Love which is saving indeed, and is in a very near Capacity of being so improved as to become such, and doubtless is so in many a one. For which cause such should be encouraged to frequent this Sacrament as often as they have Opportunity, with the best Preparation they can make.

3. To *be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*, (as all they are, who eat that Bread, and drink that Cup unworthily, *ver.* 27.) can signifie no less, and it may be no more, than a being guilty of a Profaning of his Body and Blood by using and receiving

receiving the Sacred Symbols and Signs thereof, with a frame of Mind altogether unſuitable to what is ſignified and repreſented thereby. And this Men are guilty of when they are no otherwiſe affected at the Commemoration of the Death of Chriſt in the Sacrament, than as if his Death had been the Death but of a common Man, nor are no more Affected with the things repreſented by that Sacrament in the eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup, than as if they were but at a common Meal. They are thus guilty, when they are ſtupid, ſottiſh, and irreverent at that Action, and void of an affecting ſenſe of the wonderful Love of our Saviour in laying down his Life for us; even then when they make uſe of that Ordinance which was purpoſely inſtituted to perpetuate and preſerve a lively ſenſe of it in Chriſtians to the end of the World.

This Profaning the Body and Blood of the Lord thus, is, as we may easily perceive, a Sin of the same Nature with that of not discerning the Lords Body in eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup, and is *resolved* into it, as *all unworthy* receiving that Sacrament is, as it should seem by St. *Paul*'s words, when he assigns the not discerning the Lords Body, as the reason why Men at any time eat that Bread and drink that Cup *unworthily*, in the former.

But now Men by common Illumination and Faith, are very capable of discerning a great difference between the Person and Death of Christ, and the Reason and End of his Death, and the Person and Death of other Men; and between the reason of eating and drinking at the Lords Table, and their eating and drinking at other Tables; and of being otherwise Affected with these things than with common things.

Con-

Considering then that the unworthy eating of that Bread, and drinking that Cup, of which the Apostle speaks, consists in such an unsuitable frame of Mind in doing so, as by reason of which Men do not discern the Lords Body, but Profane it and the sacred Signs and Symbols of it: And considering likewise that the Apostle makes the danger of thus eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup unworthily, the reason of his Exhorting them to examine themselves before they come to that Supper; it is easie to understand what the Apostle would have them examine themselves about in Order to their Communicating at the Table of the Lord. And it is about these things especially as I conceive, *viz.* whether they understand the Nature of that Ordinance, and for what end our Lord did Institute it. And whether they are like to find themselves Affected with a sense of that great Love of Christ in dying for them, which is Represented and

Commemorated in that Sacrament: And whether they do not judge him most worthy of their Love and Thanks for such Love of his to them: And whether they do not judge it fit and reasonable that they should live unto him, who dyed for them: And whether and how far they do endeavour to do so.

And St. *Paul* had a little before his Exhorting them to examine themselves, represented to them the Nature and End of that Ordinance according to its first Institution, to the end they might examine themselves by it, whether they had apprehensions sutable to it, and that they might the better know how to govern and demean themselves in the use of it.

Now, if after all this, we should look into those outward Acts of unworthiness, for which St. *Paul* greatly blames those of this Church, telling them that their Communicating

ting in that manner, *was not to eat the Lords Supper*, and for which, and for not *diſcerning the Lords Body*, he ſays, that *many were weak and ſickly among them, and many dead*, we ſhall find that Men but of common Grace may eaſily avoid being guilty of like abuſes.

The firſt Abuſe of this kind the Apoſtle takes Notice of, was their *Schiſmaticalneſs* in the uſe of this Ordinance, by which they defeated in a manner one great end of it. In *Chap.* 11. *ver.* 17. he charges their coming together in their Church-Aſſemblies, to be *not for the better, but for the worſe.* And this he did upon this account, becauſe when *they came together in the Church, there were Diviſions among them*, ver. 18. And in *ver.* 20. he told them, That *this was not to eat the Lords Supper*, to Communicate ſo dividedly as it ſeems they did. For in *ver.* 21. he ſaith, *every one taketh before other his own Supper.* By which

words considered with their relation to the Context, several Authors have understood the Schismatical Practice of the several Parties into which that Church was divided, in Communicating apart one from another. For although they came together in one place to do it, yet so, as that one Party made an end of their Communicating before another had begun theirs. I will instance in such Authors for this against which the *Dissenters* can have least Exception. *Cartwright*, upon the place in his Confutation of the *Rhemists* Translation of the New Testament, delivers his sense thus. *There was a double Abuse among them: One in their Love Feasts,* &c. *while that which should have served for the knitting the knot of Love, was used to cut the Cord thereof, in that every one as himself listed, made choice of such as he would have to sit at Table with him, the other either not tarried for, or thrust out when they came, especially the Poor. The other Abuse pulled in*

by the former, was, for that those which were Companions at one Table in the Common Feast, Communicated also in the Sacred with the same Separation and severalty. Dr. *Mayor* saith thus: *It seems this good Order was perverted among the* Corinthians, *one Company being of one Sect coming before another, and receiving the Lords Supper and this their own Supper, in a most scandalous manner departed; and then came another Company doing likewise.* Mr. *Sam. Cradock*, in his Apostolical History, pag. 72. delivers his sense thus: *In those their Feasts of Charity, at the end whereof the Lords Supper was Celebrated, they did not now observe the true Church Communion; but every one, that is, every Faction or Division being come to the place of the Assembly, did presently sit down to eat what they brought in company of their own Party, not minding or regarding others; whereupon this Holy Feast was neither Celebrated at the same time by all, nor in Holy Con-*

cased, contrary to the true Union of Christians signified thereby. Unto which I might add the *Dutch Annotators* upon the place. *Own Supper, that is, a Supper which is not held in Common of the whole Church, as the Lords Supper must be held, but which is held privately by some alone. Every one, that is, every one that held with them.* And St. *Paul*'s words in *ver.* 33, 34. seem strongly to back the Interpretation and sense of these Authors. His words are these; *Wherefore my Brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another, that ye come not together to condemnation.* Now, unless one Party had Feasted and Communicated together before another, there would have been no occasion for this Admonition, of tarrying one for another; unless we could suppose that the *Individuals* did eat their own Supper and the Lords Supper *singly* and apart from all the rest; which is no ways likely, so long as they had those of their own Party to Associate themselves

ſelves with: That phraſe of their coming *together to eat*, ſhews they did not eat ſingly and apart.

This Sacrament by tending to awaken the ſenſe of Chriſts love to all his members, one as well as another, by dying for them all, tends to Unite and Knit them all one to another in mutual love, as co-partners together in the ſame benefits by his death, and to render them all dear one to another, becauſe they were ſo to him when he gave himſelf for them all, 1 *Cor.* 10. 17. To uſe this Sacrament therefore as an Inſtrument of diviſion as they did, was to pervert the end and uſe of it, and to Act contradictiouſly to the good and benefit which our Saviour deſigned his People by it.

Conſidering then that their communicating thus dividedly, was that which made their coming together to be, not for the better but for the worſe, *ver.* 17. 18. and to be a coming to-

gether for condemnation, *ver.* 33, 34. it highly concerns those amongst us who divide themselves in their Sacramental communion from their Brethren, thorowly to review and examin the reasons and grounds upon which they do it, lest their coming together should be found before God, to be a coming together, not for the better, but for the worse, and a coming together to condemnation.

This Factious communicating of these *Corinthians*, the Apostle we see did insist on more than on any other, their Sacramental abuses, repeating this, and concluding with a particular caution, and admonition against it; which is more than he did concerning any other of them.

And yet this Schismatical communicating was such, as Christians by vertue of common grace may easily avoid the like, as every one will grant.

The

The other abuſes at their Feaſts of Charity, and at the Sacrament, were their neglecting and deſpiſing their poor Brethren, and ſuffering them to hunger, when at the ſame time they made themſelves guilty of intemperance and exceſs; *one is hungry, another is drunk, deſpiſe ye the Church of God, and ſhame them which have not?* Theſe alſo were ſuch unworthy Acts, as Chriſtians by common grace may eaſily keep themſelves from being guilty of the like.

Now all theſe outward Acts of unworthineſs proceeded from their not rightly diſcerning the Lords Body, as we may well conceive, either as not underſtanding the nature of the Ordinance, or as not being duly affected with what was repreſented and commemorated by it. And therefore for remedy for time to come, he puts them upon examining themſelves, concerning the apprehenſions, the ſenſe and affection,

which Christians ought to have touching those things when they go to the Table of the Lord. I shall not proceed to shew how each of these external Acts of unworthy communicating proceeded from their not discerning the Lords Body, which yet might easily be done.

Upon the whole matter I think we may conclude, that if men by examination find themselves in a capacity and disposition, to answer our Lords end, in this his institution, by eating and drinking at his Table in a grateful remembrance of him, that then they are not altogether unfit and unworthy to be Communicants of it. For men receive the Sacrament worthily or unworthily, according as they do or do not thereby answer the end and design of it, in remembring our blessed Saviour.

QUERY

QUERY X.

WHy, and for what reaſon may it be conceived, does Almighty God own and allow others to be of the Church as Viſible, than only ſuch as are of the Church as Inviſible.

There are ſeveral things offer themſelves to our conſideration which ſeem to render it fit, and reaſonable, and well-becoming the wiſdom and goodneſs of God that it ſhould be ſo, and ſuch as render it highly uſeful and beneficial unto men. As,

1. Becauſe it tends more abundantly to increaſe the number of Inviſible Church Members, than it would if none ſhould be admitted into the Viſible Church, until they were of the Inviſible, or worthily reputed to be ſo. That it has this tendency, needs no

no better proof than the Experience the Church of God has had of the happy effect of this way and method of converting men, above what has been produced in the other way. Experience has made it manifest, that abundant more thorow and sound conversions in men have been made *in* the Visible Church than *out* of it, and *after* they have been baptized, than *before*. More in the Church of God have been made good, and that by means of their being in it, than have been made so before they were admitted into it. How rarely have any thorow and sound conversions been wrought in men while out of the Church since Miracles ceased? How seldom do we see or hear of any Jews, or profest Infidels become really holy and good men, tho they live among Christians and where they have the opportunity of hearing the Gospel if they had any mind to it? When as, thanks be to God, we have known or heard of multitudes of Conversions of this nature that have been wrought

in

ing men after they have been in the Church.

If the Apostles in their time did by vertue of their Ministry convert many so as of bad to make them really holy and good, before they were received into the Church: Yet as their Calling was *extraordinary*, so was their Ministry by which those Conversions were wrought; their Mission and Doctrine being attested to come from heaven by multitudes of miraculous operations, and marvelous gifts. And therefore those Conversions which were wrought by such extraordinary means, must be looked upon as extraordinary Conversions. And to argue from things extraordinarily done, to a necessity of having the like done in ordinary cases, and under ordinary means, is so absord, and such a piece of unreasonableness, as those we call *Seekers* are guilty of, who can find, as they think, no true Churches extant or visible, because not called by men qualified with like extraordinary gifts as those, or many of those in the

Apostles

Apostles days were, by whom Churches were then gathered, And indeed, had not the means by which the Apostles converted those whom they did convert, been *extraordinary*, it would have been in a manner impossible for them to have succeeded in their undertaking as they did, considering that they were to convert them from other Religions in which they had been educated and brought up, and which they had received from their Fathers and Fore-fathers, unto a new Religion, the Christian Religion, which was so greatly different from theirs as it was; especially from that of *Paganism*, from which most of their Conversions probably were made.

But when the Apostles had in this extraordinary way gathered our Saviour a Church all over the known World, and settled particular Churches, it was not necessary, as the Event shews, that this extraordinary way of converting men should be continued. For when by this extraordinary means of converting men way was made

made for converting them in an ordinary way, then that which was extraordinary ceaſed: Like as the giving the Iſraelites *Manna* from heaven ceaſed when they came into *Canaan*, and had opportunity of being ſupplied with food in an ordinary way. And from that time forward there have been but few Converſions made in thoſe without the Church, but moſt of thoſe that have been made in bringing men to the power of godlineſs, have been made upon thoſe within the Viſible Church.

For tho God is pleaſed, I doubt not, to plant true ſaving grace in ſome in their early days by the benefit of godly Education: yet there are very many others, who having been received into the Church by Baptiſm in their Infancy, have little or nothing more than a form of godlineſs (if ſo much) found in them when grown up. But among theſe there are many who in time are brought on, or converted to the Power of Godlineſs by means of their being in the Church, and under

those Ordinances of God there administred, by which he is wont to work saving grace in men. This is Gods ordinary way of Conversion, since that which was extraordinary ceased: And ever since that time, almost all the Conversions that have been made in men to a saving Christian faith, and to a faithful practice and the Power of Christianity, have been made upon persons baptized and within the Church.

And altho the Conversion of men to Christianity by the Ministry of the Apostles was extraordinary, because wrought in an extraordinary way, and by extraordinary means, as I have shewed: yet we have great reason to think that those Conversions, or many of them that proved effectual at last, were but only beginnings, and preparatory to a second and thorow Conversion of them while they were yet without the visible Church, and were carried quite through, and made effectual after they were brought into the Church by Baptism.

And

And the manner of the Apoſtles writing to the Chriſtians after they had been in the Church for ſome time, ſeems to intimate that the Apoſtles themſelves had no other apprehenſions of thoſe Converſions, or many of them. For we find them earneſtly perſwading thoſe Chriſtians to put away ſuch practices, the retaining of which could not well conſiſt with a thorow and ſound converſion: Which argues, that at leaſt many of them had not yet put them off, tho they had been for ſome time in the Church. Thus Col. 3. 8, 9. *But now ye alſo put off all theſe; anger, wrath, malice, blaſphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, ſeeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds:* That is, they had engaged to do ſo in Baptiſm. See the like again, *Epheſ.* 5. 3. And 1 Pet. 2. 1. *Wherefore laying aſide all malice, and all guile, and hypocriſies, and envies, and all evil ſpeakings; as new-born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby:* 1 Cor. 6. 15. *Know ye*

not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an Harlot? God forbid. What, know ye not that he that is joyned to an harlot, is one body? Chap. 10. 21, 22. *Ye cannot drink the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of devils: Ye cannot be partakers of the Lords Table, and of the Table of Devils? Do we provoke the Lord to jealousie? Are we stronger than he?* Chap. 15. 33, 34. *Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.* 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17. *What agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? For ye are the Temple of the living God. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you,* Chap. 12. 20, 21. *For I fear lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes,*

ſtrifes, backbitings, whiſperings, ſwellings, tumults: and leſt when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I ſhall bewail many which have ſinned already, and have not repented of the uncleaneſs, and fornication, and laſciviouſneſs which they have committed. Phil. 2. 22. *All ſeek their own, and not the things of Jeſus Chriſt.*

So by the general Epiſtle which St. *James* wrote, not to any particular Church, but to the twelve Tribes ſcattered abroad, it appears that he was very jealous and ſuſpicious that the faith which very many of the Chriſtians had, was but *a dead and unavailable faith*, and ſuch as would neither juſtifie nor ſave them: becauſe it was but a barren and unfruitful faith, ſuch as did neither purifie the heart, nor reform the life, *being hearers of the Word, and not doers.* For for all their knowledge and their faith, it ſeems by the tenour of his writing, that their luſts remained ſtill luſty and ſtrong, that warred in their members: The love of pleaſure, their

unworthy compliances to keep friendship with the World, pride, envy, and grudging one against another, strife, and contention, and uncharitable judging and condemning one another, and provoking one another with their unruly Tongues, and cursing and swearing, and such like distempers it seems did abound among them. And St. *James* by this Epistle to them endeavours their thorow Conversion; and encourageth the sincere among them to endeavour it likewise, saying, *If any see his brother err, and one convert him: Let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins.* And when we likewise find that there were but a few names in *Sardis* but what had defiled their Garments, having indeed a name to live, but were dead; and nothing which our Saviour could commend in all the Church of *Laodicea*: I say, when we find this, and consider all these things, and more of like nature in the Apostles Writings,

we

we have great reaſon to think that many of thoſe whom the Apoſtles baptized, were not thorowly converted till after they were brought into the Church, and yet many ſuch were ſo after.

And indeed I do not know what other reaſon can be given why the Apoſtles made ſuch haſte as they did to baptize perſons after they had once gained their conſent to turn Chriſtians, without ſtaying for any farther trial, but that they thought their thorow Converſion was more likely to be effected within the Church than without. It is one thing to be converted from a falſe Religion to a bare or notitional belief of the true, and another thing to be converted from that to a right practical belief of it. There were ſome who did believe in the former ſenſe through the power of conviction, and could do no otherwiſe, who yet had no mind to become obedient to the Rules and Precepts of the Goſpel in all things. Such were thoſe *Joh.* 2. 23. and thoſe *Joh.* 12. 42, 43.

and such was *Simon Magus*, and such were those, of whom St. *James* speaks, that had but a dead faith: And thus it is with many that are of the Visible Church in these days, who have no other faith for some time, and yet afterward are converted to a lively practical belief of the Christian Religion. And it is probable, that the faith of most of the Apostles Converts went little or nothing farther than to a general belief of the truth of the Apostles Doctrine until after they were baptized; they having so little time of learning before as generally they had, but were carried on further to a more particular distinct and practical belief by after-teaching when they were in the Church. And this is not disagreeable to what I have formerly noted from the words of our Saviours Commission to his Apostles touching a double teaching; the one to make men become Disciples, which went before Baptism, the other to direct them how to live as Christians, which followed after it, *Mat.* 28. 19,20.

But

But however, whatever thorow and effectual Converſions the Apoſtles might in an extraordinary way effect in men while they were without the Church for the firſt founding of the Chriſtian Church; yet we are ſure that ſince that extraordinary way of Converſion has been diſcontinued, abundantly more have been converted by their being in the Church, and by advantage of the means of converſion which they have there enjoyed, than have been among thoſe without the Church. And this is the firſt reaſon aſſigned why others ſhould be admitted into the Viſible Church than ſuch as are of the Inviſible, or than are reputed to be ſo before ſuch admiſſion.

2. Another reaſon why we may conceive Almighty God allows many others to be of the Viſible Church than are of the Inviſible, is, becauſe ſo to do is more uſeful for the propagating and ſpreading of the Chriſtian Religion in the World, than the limiting and reſtraining the Viſible Church

Church only to thoſe who are of the Inviſible alſo, can be. For it cannot be denied but that ſuch gifts, and ſuch common grace as will not be ſufficient unto a mans own Salvation, may yet be very uſeful for the maintaining and defending the Chriſtian Doctrine againſt Adverſaries, and for the inſtructing others in it, and for the perſuading them to believe it, and to live according to it. Which was the reaſon, I ſuppoſe, why St. *Paul* ſaid, that *he rejoyced, and would rejoyce that Chriſt was preached, tho it were but inſincerely by ſome*, as well as for being preached *in truth by others*, Phil. 1. 18. For the more men of Parts, and Learning, and of Intereſt among men the Chriſtian Religion and ſound Doctrine has to aſſert and defend it, and the more there are of others to abet and encourage them in it, (though many of them ſhall be ſuppoſed to be mainly influenced therein by motives of ſecular honour and intereſt) the more credit in general, and the more reputation it will have in the World, and the

the further it will ſpread. As we ſee on the contrary, the more Popery has had men of parts, and learning, and of intereſt otherwiſe to promote and propagate it, the more and the farther it hath ſpread and prevailed in the World: And the ſame is true of other Errors and Hereſies, as that of *Arianiſm* when time was. There is no queſtion, but the more good men are backt in their promulging ſound and ſaving Doctrine by men of great intereſt in the World, that agree with them in Doctrine and ſubſtance of Worſhip (tho they ſhould not in all reſpects be ſo hearty and ſincere as the other are,) the more Chriſtian Religion gains among men.

And if all ſuch as theſe ſhould be made enemies to the Church by being denied to be of it, the Churches power of propagating the Chriſtian Religion would quickly be thereby exceedingly weakened, and the propagation thereof greatly obſtructed. We have not now Miracles, the extraordinary means by which Chriſtianity was

was at firſt propagated; without which it is not probable the unbelieving and blind world would have been reconciled to it upon account of its own intrinſick excellency and goodneſs. And therefore there is now the more need of the help of all Chriſtians to propagate the Chriſtian Religion: Not only of ſuch as are of the Inviſible Church, and Viſible likewiſe, but alſo of thoſe who are but only of the Viſible. The ſucceſs in propagating the Chriſtian Religion, does not wholly depend upon the moral goodneſs of the Inſtrruments by whom it is done, but ſo much upon its own goodneſs, that if that be but ſufficiently diſcovered, tho but by men defective in their Morals, it is yet able to commend it ſelf very much unto the choice of men. *If they had ſtood in my counſel, and had cauſed my people to hear my words, then they ſhould have turned them from their evil ways*, ſaith God concerning the falſe Prophets, *Jer.*23.22.

It is no ſmall matter upon this account

count to be born within the Pale of the Viſible Church of Chriſtian Parents, and to be educated in the Chriſtian Religion, though by Parents too much ſtrangers to the power of it. *And of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, this and that man was born in her, The Lord ſhall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there*, Pſal. 87.5,6. How many worthy Children has the Church had, and of great uſe in it, who yet have been born of Parents of but ſmall account for Religion, So that ſuch mens being of the Church, is of great uſe for the propagating of truly religious men, and by them the Chriſtian Religion. But if ſuch men as theſe had been deprived of Church education by their Parents being deprived of Memberſhip in the Viſible Church, the Church in all probability would have been deprived of ſuch uſeful Members as theſe prove to be for the propagating of the true Chriſtian Religion.

3. Another reaſon may be, becauſe to take others into the Viſible Church than ſuch as are, or are credibly reputed

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to be of the Invisible, tends much more to the security of the Invisible Church in the world than the excluding all such would do. For were it not for those of the Church as Visible over and besides such as are of it as Invisible, those which are of the Church as Invisible would be in much more danger than now they are, of being devoured by those numerous enemies which they have in the world. *Christs Flock is but a little flock* comparatively; and there are but *few that find the narrow way that leads to life*, as he hath told us. And so he hath told us also in the Parable of the Sower, that of *four* sorts of hearers of the Gospel, there is but *one* that brings forth fruit: And in another place, that among the many that are called, there are but *few chosen*.

Now then, if when with the help of those of the Visible Church which are not of the Invisible, (which yet according to the Scriptures seem to be far the greater number) those of the Invisible Church have enough to do

to

to ſubſiſt in the world without being rooted out of it by the Enemies of Chriſtianity, as we ſee they have, what can we think would become of them but ruine without a ſtanding Miracle to ſecure them, if thoſe who are but only of the Viſible Church were made Enemies alſo to thoſe of the Inviſible, as doubtleſs they would if they ſhould all be rejected by them as none of Chriſts Church on earth? How unable would they be to defend themſelves againſt the Popiſh Party in the world, if they were not aſſiſted by thoſe who are but of the Church as Viſible? Or how unable would they be to defend themſelves againſt all thoſe that are Enemies to Chriſtianity both name and thing, if the bulk and body of men, which are Chriſtians only in outward Form and Profeſſion, did not ſtand as a ſcreen between them and thoſe enemies?

Our Saviour hath declared that the Wheat would be in great danger of being rooted up if the Tares ſhould for the preſent be gathered out of it; and

and for that reason *would have both to grow together till the harvest*, Mat. 13. Our Saviour did not intend hereby (no more do I by what I have said) to put a bar against purging the Church of Capital Offenders by Discipline, and therefore by *Tares* its probable he meant carnal Gospellers that yet are not obnoxious to Excommunication, such as the thorny-ground hearers, in whom the Cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of Riches, and Pleasures of this Life, choak the Word which they have received, and which they profess, so that it brings forth in them no fruit to perfection.

But before I proceed any farther I must remove an Objection, which otherwise lies against the use which I here make of this Parable of our Saviour. And the Objection is this; That this Parable makes nothing against gathering the bad from among the good in the *Church*, but from among the good in the *World*; Not that they should both grow together in the Church till Harvest, but in the World

World. And to ſtrengthen this they alledge our Saviours interpretation of this Parable, where he ſays, that the *Field* where the Tares and the Wheat grow together, is the *World*, Mat. 13. 38.

And this indeed at firſt ſight ſeems to be a very conſiderable Objection. But if we conſider the matter well, I think it may appear otherwiſe. The *Field* indeed in which the Seed was ſown, and the Goſpel firſt preached, was the *World*, according to our Saviours Commiſſion to his Apoſtles; *Go ye into all the world and preach the Goſpel*, Mar. 16. 15. But then thoſe that received this Seed of the Goſpel, ſo as to make profeſſion of adhering to it, were preſently baptized and received into the Church. Now it was among theſe that the Tares ſprang up, many of them proving bad Chriſtians. So that the Seed was firſt ſown in the World as in a common field: But yet the Tares ſprang up in that part of the world which was now become the Viſible Church, and an encloſed

Garden. And therefore when the time of the Harvest shall come when these Tares must be separated from the Wheat, our Saviour says, *They shall be gathered out of the Kingdom of the Son of Man*, Ver. 41. where they were permitted to grow till this Harvest. And what is this Kingdom of the Son of Man, but his Visible Church? The History of the Event of the Apostles Preaching, does plainly lay open the meaning of this Parable, and that of the Draw-net, and other like Parables, in that the Visible Church which they gathered out of the world, consisted of bad as well as good.

And this Parable in particular shews further that these Tares were not to be gathered out of the Church, for this very reason, *Lest while ye gather up the Tares*, saith he, *ye root up also the Wheat with them.* So that it seems that the Tares growing with the Wheat is in some respect matter of security to the Wheat, and that the Wheat would be in more danger by the Tares being gathered from among

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it, than by their growing together with it: in more danger of bein rooted up, or rooted out. And this ſeems fully to juſtifie and make good that reaſon I am now upon, why all unregenerate Chriſtians ſhould not be denied a place and being in the Viſible Church.

If it ſhall be hear ſaid, that the Church in the Primitive times, when but few in number, did yet ſubſiſt, yea, and abundantly increaſe too, tho they had no humane or worldly Power to defend them, and when almoſt the whole world both of Jews and Gentiles were againſt them: And why may it not as well do ſo now, tho none that are not of the Inviſible Church ſhould be any defence unto it.

I anſwer, that there is no doubt but that they might ſubſiſt in the world, continue and increaſe as well as they did, provided they had but the ſame extraordinary means to back and abet them, and to increaſe their numbers, as thoſe Primitive Chriſtians had: I mean thoſe miraculous Powers which then procured the Chriſtians great re-

putation among the People, and which did still attract and draw in more to their Party than were diminished by the Persecution which was raised against them by the higher Powers which were then Infidel. For by reason of those miraculous wonders which were done by the Apostles and others in those times, the multitude of People were so astonished and affected, that they favoured them so far as that the Rulers were put under some awe. For we read that for the reason aforesaid, *great grace or favour was upon them all*, to wit, all the Christians, *Acts* 4. 33. And Chap. 5. 13. its said, *that the people magnified them.* So that the Rulers when they had otherwise a mind to it, *found not how to punish them because of the people, for all men glorified God for that which was done*, Chap. 4. 21. And in *Chap.* 5. 26. its said of the Captain and Officers that were sent to bring the Apostles before the Council, *that they brought them without violence, because they feared the people lest they should have been stoned.* And by reason of

of the credit they obtained among the people both to themſelves and their way by the numerous Miracles they wrought; *believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women* notwithſtanding all the oppoſition which was made againſt them by the Rulers, *Chap.* 5. 14. And that wonderful increaſe of Believers which was made from among the Heathen alſo, was attributed by St. *Paul* unto thoſe Signs and Wonders that were wrought for the proof and confirmation of the Chriſtian Way, *I will not dare*, ſaith he, *to ſpeak of any of thoſe things which Chriſt hath not wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty Signs and Wonders by the Spirit of God*, Rom. 15. 18, 19.

But if the ſmall number of ſincere Chriſtians that are in the world, had no other means to preſerve themſelves and to increaſe their number but the goodneſs of their Cauſe, and their own Innocency, and were not countenanced and protected by Chriſtian

States and Governours, and by a multitude more of the same Profession with themselves than are of like sincerity in that Profession; they would be in great danger of being in a manner extirpated out of the world by the Infidel and Antichristian Parties in it. When the Papal defection befel the Church within the *Roman* Empire, the greatest part perhaps of the then Visible Church in that part of the world, fell off from the Orthodox and sincere, and became their Enemies in time. The consequence of which was the exterminating and rooting out of that part of the world, in a great measure, the Orthodox and sincere Christians. Which is a great instance to shew how it would fare with those of the Invisible Church, if they were deserted by those Christians which are not of it, or if those were rejected as no fellow-members of the Visible Church, and thereby made their Enemies.

4. Another reason is taken from the danger in another respect of reckoning

reckoning none of the Church as Viſible, but upon the reputation of their being of the Church as Inviſible: For to admit men upon no other terms into the Viſible Church, nor to its Communion, but upon the reputation, and under the Notion of their being already of the Church as Inviſible, tends greatly to betray many Souls into a dangerous ſnare of ſelf-deceiving. For, if this rule of admiſſion ſhould be obſerved, many miſtakes would be committed either through fallibility or partiality of judgment in them that admit them; and ſo, many would be received into the Viſible Church, or to the Communion of it as Members of the Inviſible, which yet are not of it. And if ſo, then all thoſe which are thus received under the approbation of the Viſible Church as Members of the Inviſible, will be thereby *ſtrengthened* in their *ſelf-flattery* and good opinion they have of themſelves touching their good and ſafe condition, when there is no ſuch matter. And when they

find the good opinion they have of themselves thus strengthened by the publick judgment of the Church concurring with them therein, they will be under the greater temptation, and in so much the greater danger of resting securely in that unsafe condition, to the great hazard of their Souls. We know, or have abundant reason to suspect, that many that have but a Form of Godliness, are *Laodicean* like, less apt to suspect the goodness of their own condition before God, than they that are truly sincere: How much less will they suspect it, and how much more will they be confirmed in the good opinion of themselves, tho false, when they have the publick judgment of the Church to back them in it, and that after inspection has been made into their lives, and signs of their Conversion approved of? As the manner is of those that go that way.

Of this danger, and of this great inconvenience, some of the *New England* Divines grew sensible after they had

had made trial of that way a great while. For in their answer to Mr. *Davenports Apologetical Preface, pa.* 43, 44. they express themselves in these words: *Indeed, when men confound these two, and do tie Visible Church Interest unto such conditions and qualifications as are reputed enough to Salvation, this may tend to harden men, and to make them conceit, that if once they be but got into the Church they are sure of heaven, when as alas it may be they are far from it.*

But now there is no such danger does arise from mens being owned Visible Church Members from their professing to believe the Christian Religion, and from their Covenanting to endeavour to live according to it. Such Profession and such Covenanting does indeed give ground of hope to the Church, that such will not be so regardless of their own Salvation as not to be willing to learn their duty, and to endeavour to do it that they may be saved. But yet such hope of the Church concerning their good

performance

performance for the future, does not minister any occasion of confidence in such men that they have *already* performed what is necessary to their Salvation, as a receiving them into the Church, and unto Communion, as having in the publick judgment of the Church already performed it, would do. This act of the Church in receiving them into Communion in her external priviledges in hope of their improving them to the saving of their Souls, gives them no ground of confidence of the safety and goodness of their condition thereby, further than they are careful *to make their Calling and Election sure by using all diligence* in improving the opportunity and means of doing so by their being in the Church.

Men are too prone to lay too great a stress upon their being received into the Visible Church and Communion, tho the Church hath past no judgment thereby of their being of the Invisible Church: how much more would they do so in case it had.

St. *Paul*

St. *Paul* was ſenſible, I doubt not, how prone many Chriſtians are to lay too much ſtreſs meerly upon their being of the Church, and partakers in the external Communion thereof; For which cauſe he cautioned the Chriſtians againſt flattering themſelves with an opinion of their ſafe condition upon that account, and laboured to poſſeſs them with a ſenſe of the danger they were in for all that, if they ſhould reſt therein without growing better and better thereby, 1 Cor. 10. *I would not*, ſaith he, *that ye ſhould be ignorant, brethren, how that all our Fathers were baptized unto* Moſes *in the Cloud, and in the Sea, and did all eat the ſame ſpiritual meat, and drink the ſame ſpiritual drink*; and yet *with many of them God was not well pleaſed, but overthrew them in the Wilderneſs.* And he told them that theſe things were *our examples*, to the intent that we ſhould not luſt after evil things as they luſted. Then enumerated their miſcarriages, and what befel them thereupon: and further told them, that theſe things hapned

happened to them for Examples or Types to us, and were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. Thereby giving them to understand, that tho they were baptized and received into the Church, and did participate of the same spiritual meat and drink in the Sacrament with the best in the Church; yet if they did not take warning by the miscarriages of those that had been of the Church, and of the Communion of it as well as they, to avoid the like, they might perish as well as the other did, for all their Communion in the Church.

5. Another reason against refusing all such Communion in the Visible Church who are not judged to be of the Church as Invisible, is taken from the danger of such a practice in another respect, and that is the danger of mistaking the good for bad, and of refusing the sincere Christians under the Notion of Carnal and Unregenerate. There is so little visible difference between what many of the same

ſame perſons were a little before they had ſaving grace, and what they are when they have it only in the loweſt degree; that men would be in great danger of miſtaking if they ſhould make a judgment of their ſpiritual ſtate under ſuch Circumſtances. And the difficulty of not miſtaking in this caſe will be ſtill increaſed, when that very little of true grace which is in ſome men, is greatly obſcured by the courſeneſs of their natural temper and diſpoſition. Beſides the prejudice which ſome good men have againſt others upon account of ſome difference in Opinion, will not ſuffer them to diſcern true grace in ſome of them in whom it is, and perhaps in ſome good degree too. This Age hath furniſhed us with too many inſtances of this nature. The like may be ſaid in reſpect of the *narrowneſs of ſpirit, and ſeverity* of many, by reaſon of which many of thoſe in whom God himſelf finds ſaving grace, would be refuſed Communion with the Church for want of it, if that opinion ſhould generally obtain.

obtain, that none should be admitted into the Visible Church, ar to its Communion, but upon the reputation of their being of the Church as Invisible.

Some do understand the danger of rooting up the Wheat if the Tares should be gathered from among it to lie in the danger of mistaking the Wheat for the Tares, if the one should be attempted to be gathered from the other. And if this should be the reason why our Saviour would have them both to grow together till the Harvest, it would be pat to what I have said on this reason. But if it be not (as I am apt to think it is not) yet then it so much the more confirms that to be our Saviours meaning which I have suggested elsewhere; for I do not know any third sense pretended to among Interpreters. But indeed there is danger in both respects: and therefore I know no inconvenience if we understand the Parable in reference to both.

Now

Now it is not hard to conceive how bad a thing it would be if ſuch as have true grace, ſhould be refuſed admittance into the Viſible Church, or to its Communion, only becauſe it is ſo little that men cannot diſcern it to be ſo. For ſuch a diſcouragement may be enough to ſet them back again, to *quench the ſmoaking flax*, and to expoſe them to the loſs of that very little grace in its beginning which they have: A thing point blank againſt that admonition and caution of our Saviour, Mat. 18. 10. *Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones.*

QUERY XI.

WHat is it that makes the difference between the Univerſal Church as Viſible, and particular Churches? And what makes the difference between one particular Church and another?

The Query being double, I ſhall anſwer to that firſt which is firſt, and do

do say, the Universal Church differs from a particular Church in two respects.

1. The Universal Church differs from a particular, as the whole differs from a part, and a particular Church differs from the Universal, as a part differs from the whole. For otherwise they are materially the same, only with this difference, the one contains all Visible Church matter, and the other but a part of it. There is nothing necessary to qualifie the matter of which a particular Church doth consist, than what made all the Members of it Members of the Universal Church, unless it be what belongs to the Officers of it as such.

2. If by a particular Church we understand one single Congregation, then a particular Church differs from the Universal as those of which it does consist do assemble together in one place for Publick Worship, which the Universal Church cannot do now, tho in the beginning of its existence possibly it might. But if by a particular Church

Church we underſtand ſo many ſingle worſhipping Congregations as are united under one and the ſame Church Government and Governours in a City, Province, or Kingdom; Then a particular Church in this ſenſe is differenced from the Church Univerſal by this Eccleſiaſtical *Polity* under which it is otherwiſe united than the Univerſal Church, as ſuch, is or can be. And ſuch a particular Church we ſuppoſe the Church in *Jeruſalem*, in *Corinth*, and in other great Cities to have been, the Scripture ſo accounting them, when yet each of them conſiſted of more ſingle worſhipping Aſſemblies than one, as may well be preſumed on ſeveral accounts, not here to be mentioned.

There is another thing which the Congregationaliſts make eſſential to the being of a particular Church (for they make it the Form or formal cauſe of it) which would be another difference between the Univerſal Church and a particular, if their Opinion and Aſſertion were admitted concerning it,

and that is their *Church Covenant or mutual engagement to walk together in the way and order of the Gospel.* And by this each one of their single Congregations distinguisheth it self from all other. And they account this so necessary, as to make it a condition of Communion without which they will not admit persons otherwise well approved of by themselves to Sacramental Communion, that is, unless they are under this engagement to them or some other Sister Church of the same kind.

But this is so much the worse, because it is done and required under the Notion of Divine appointment, when God has appointed no such thing. Which is such a piece of superstition as the enjoyning the use of the Ceremonies of the Church of *England* is free from, so long as they are not enjoyned as things of divine appointment, but only as of an indifferent nature, and therefore there is no such reason to scruple them as there is to scruple this practice upon those terms. There

There are two Texts of Scripture upon which more eſpecially and principally they ground this opinion and practice of theirs; which I ſhall a little enquire into. The one is 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. which Dr. *O.* to this end quotes more than once in his late Book; the words are theſe: *And this they did, not as we hoped, but firſt gave their own ſelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.* The *Vs*, here in the Text, are St. *Paul* and *Timotheus*, from whom this Epiſtle came, *Chap.* 1. 1. And if ſo, how could the Churches of *Macedonia's* giving themſelves to St. *Paul* and *Timothy*, poſſibly ſignifie their mutual Covenanting one with another among themſelves? And is it not as ſtrange alſo that they ſhould give themſelves to *Paul* and *Timothy* in order to the Conſtituting themſelves Churches, when as that giving themſelves to *Paul* and *Timothy*, here ſpoken of, was done then when they were already Churches, as the whole Context from *ver.* 1. doth ſhew. And if their giving themſelves to *Paul* and

Timothy was one of those things which they did, more than *Paul* and *Timothy* hoped for, then such a confederation is not likely to be meant by it as was essentially necessary to their existence as Churches; this certainly would not have been more than they hoped for, if it had been their duty, and of so great a necessity. This is enough to shew how impertinently this Scripture is alledged. But the whole Context shews that the things St. *Paul* here speaks of, were quite of another nature, and that is the liberality of the Churches of *Macedonia* towards the relief of the Christians of *Jerusalem*, and their zeal in being otherwise serviceable to so good a work, wherein they did indeed exceed the expectation of *Paul* and *Timothy*. For their Poverty to which they were brought by suffering for the Gospel was so deep, that St. *Paul* it seems scarce thought it fit to receive any thing of them, and it was upon their earnest intreaty that he did; and yet they did not only thus give above their ability, but

besides

beſides their giving up themſelves to God as ready to ſuffer further for him if called to it, they gave up themſelves to St. *Paul* & *Timothy* alſo to aſſiſt them in that charitable work they had in hand, by their further endeavours to promote it among others. For they *intreated* Paul *and* Timothy *earneſtly, to take upon them the fellowſhip of miniſtring to the Saints*, the managing of that affair, and procured them to ſend *Titus* to *Corinth* to promote the ſame buſineſs as appears by *ver.* 6.

This Scripture though ſo great a ſtranger to this opinion as you ſee, yet is that which ſo far as ever I could perceive, is chiefly depended upon in this cauſe. They bring in alſo, as favouring their notion and practice, the ſaying of St. *Peter* to the Chriſtians; *ye alſo as lively ſtones are built up a ſpiritual houſe an holy Prieſthood*, &c. 1 Pet. 2. 5. And they do, it ſeems, ſuppoſe that theſe living ſtones being ſo laid together as to to make a ſpiritual houſe, is done by their Confederation and Covenant, as

the *Cement* by which the Christians were united and combined in one particular Church, *fitly framed together*, as the phrase is, *Ephes.* 2.

But St. *Peter* is not here speaking to any one particular Church as such, when he says ye are built up a spiritual house, but to *the strangers scattered abroad throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*, as appears *Chap.* 1. 1. And no one surely can think that these Christians thus scattered, and at this distance, could become one particular Church by such a mutual Confederation as these hold necessary for the forming a particular Church. And if not, it must be by vertue of somewhat else than such a particular Church Covenant as these dissenting Brethren thought to find here, by which Christians in so many distant parts of the world, as aforesaid, were built up one spiritual house. And that doubtless must be the same thing by which all Christians in the world become one spiritual house of God; for so they

are

are. For when Chriſt is ſaid to be *High Prieſt over the houſe of God*, Heb. 10. 21. *And to be faithful as a Son over his own houſe*, Heb. 3. 6. Houſe in theſe places cannot ſignifie leſs than the Univerſal Chriſtian Church, who are called *the houſhold of faith*. And how do all theſe Chriſtians become the houſe of God, but by being joyned and devoted to him by the Baptiſmal Covenant, and thereby to one another, among whom he dwells and is Worſhipped as in his holy Temple: For by this they all become one body, which is but another Metaphor under which to expreſs the ſame thing, *Epheſ.* 2. 21, 22. 1 *Cor.* 12. 13.

It is the ſame thing which makes perſons Members of the Church Univerſal, that qualifies them for particular Church Memberſhip; and that is the Baptiſmal Covenant. And to make any other Covenant beſides this ſo neceſſary to qualifie men for particular Church Memberſhip and Communion, as to make this of Gods own appointment inſufficient for that

end, is a great impeachment of it, and contains in it such consequences as the Abetters of it would be ashamed to countenance if they were aware of it. For so long as it is asserted to be of divine appointment; the *formal cause* of a particular Church, and *essential* to its being, and is made the *Condition* of Communion when God has no where appointed or required it: so long it may be charged with these evils.

1. With a *teaching for Doctrine the Commandments of men*, a piece of vain Worship condemned by our Saviour, *Mat.* 15.9. which is the same thing with *adding* to Gods Word, or a *saying he saith*, when he *hath not said it*.

2. It is in some sort and in part a making void the Command or Institution of God, that men might establish their own Tradition. For whereas the Baptismal Covenant qualifies men for particular Church Membership by bringing them into the Universal Church, this Opinion denies the

the Baptiſmal Covenant to be ſufficient to this end, and ſets up this other confederating in its room.

3. It contains in it the Unchurching of all thoſe Goſpel Churches that are, or ever have been in the world, that have not been thus united by Church Covenanting. For to ſay this is the Form of a particular Church, or the formal cauſe of it, is in effect to ſay, that none are really Churches without it; for Matter and Form are eſſential to the being of Churches as well as they are of other things. Now to Unchurch all Churches that have not been thus confederate, is *a great thing indeed*, if we conſider how few years it is ſince ſuch Covenanting was heard of in any Chriſtian Church in the world, and by how inconſiderable a number of Congregations it has been uſed ſince it has been heard of. Theſe things conſidered, it is matter of a very venturous and daring nature.

As for the other part of our Enquiry, touching that which makes the difference between one particular Church and

and another, we may conceive of it thus.

1. It consists partly in that which does distinguish one Town from another, or one great Neighbourhood from another, and that is the bounds of Habitation. And this distinction is as well convenient, yea, necessary for *Ecclesiastical* Order, and peaceable Government, as it is for *Civil*, and does as well accommodate the ends of the one as of the other. and without this, a peaceable and orderly Government in the whole Church would be impracticable, even as it would be in an Universal Empire: And thus the Churches planted by the Apostles, are differenced and distinguished one from another; that at *Rome* from that at *Corinth*, and that at *Ephesus* from that at *Philippi*; yea, that at *Cenchrea* from that at *Corinth*, which yet bordered upon *Corinth*, and so of the rest. And indeed that difference which is made between Church and Church by Vicinity of Neighbourhood and Cohabitation, does best answer the ends of particu-

particular Church Aſſociation, ſuch as is aſſembling together for Publick Worſhip, and mutual aſſiſtances in all Chriſtian offices of Brotherly love and friendſhip. But this alone does not conſtitute Chriſtians dwelling together in the ſame place, a particular Chriſtian Church, tho by their being of the Church Univerſal, they are as fit matter qualified for it. But

2. That which does conſtitute ſuch to be a particular Church, as that ſignifies a company of Chriſtians in Local Communion in Divine Worſhip, conſiſting in the participation of Goſpel Ordinances, is the placing over them one or more Church Officers, to miniſter to them therein. By which Officers, as well as by the place where they dwell, and where they aſſemble for Worſhip, they are diſtinguiſhed from other like Churches under the Conduct of other Church-Officers of the ſame kind. For by ſuch their joynt Local Communion in the Worſhip adminiſtred by their ſpiritual Guide or Paſtor, they are united with him

him and among themselves, as one Worshipping Congregation; by which Union also they are distinguished from other particular Churches, as other particular Churches in like manner are from them.

Those of the Independent Church-way do indeed hold particular Churches, as such, to be Antecedent to any Church-Officers over them. Which is the reason which Dr. *Owen* in his *Inquiry concerning Churches*, does alledge to prove the Power of the Keys to be given to the Church. And to prove particular Churches to be Antecedent to Church Officers, he quotes *Acts* 14. 23. where it is said of *Paul* and *Barnabas*; *And when they had ordained them Elders in every Church*, &c. As for this proof of his Assertion, I shall consider it by and by; but shall first examine and try what is in the Assertion it self, which I am inclined to think will be found full of mistake, and that the contrary will be found true, *viz.* that the Evangelical Ministry is, and always has been

been Antecedent to the exiſtence of Chriſtian Churches, and indeed an inſtrumental cauſe of their being. And this is true, not only of particular Churches, but alſo of the Univerſal Church as Chriſtian, which yet in order of nature is Antecedent to particular Churches. The gathering of Chriſt a Chriſtian Church in the world at firſt, was the effect of the Apoſtolical Miniſtry and the Miniſtry of their aſſiſtants. The Church *is built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Chriſt being the chief corner ſtone*, Eph. 2. 20. and the Foundation is Antecedent to the Superſtructure. All the additions that have been ſince made to the Viſible Church. have been by the Miniſterial Office, by letting all the particular Members of that addition into it by Baptiſm.

And when men are ordained Miniſters of the Goſpel, they are not ordained Miniſters of this or that particular Church, but Miniſters of Chriſt to the Church in general,

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Let no man glory in men; for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, all are yours, and ye are Christs, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. *Paul, Apollos,* and *Cephas* were theirs in common with others, not theirs appropriately. And their being sent or called to be Ministers to this or that particular Church, is but the application of their general capacity to particular use and exercise, to wit, that of Ministration to such a people in particular. And this Ministerial Power they bring with them to the Church or People among whom they are placed, but do not receive it from them: And it is by virtue of their Ministry and Ministration that a particular Body of people can act or perform any Publick Acts of Communion peculiar to a Church as such. And therefore as they cannot act as a Church without such a Ministry, so neither can they properly be a Church without it. The first thing St. *Paul* mentions, *Ephes.* 4. 11. 12. for which our Saviour Christ gave Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors

Pastors and Teachers, was for the *perfecting of the Saints*, or for the *joyning them together*, or for the *making them up*, or for the *compacting or knitting them together*: For thus variously is that word rendred by Expositors; but all to the same sense. For it is for the knitting them and holding them together as one body in their several Publick Assemblies for Worship and Edification. And indeed a Church is so called from several Christians assembling together for Publick Worship, their Union wherein is made by their joynt concurrence with their Spiritual Pastor in his Ministration; for which end and purpose such Officers are given and appointed by Christ, as the words of St. *Paul* now alledged shew.

And now as for the Text alledged by the Doctor, in which *Paul* and *Barnabas* are said to have ordained Elders in *every Church*, Acts 14.23. this does not prove the Churches there spoken of to be such Antecedently to any Ministerial Act or Power by which they became such. For they had been

been made Churches in ſome ſort by the planting of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, who alſo as Church Officers miniſtred to them while they were among them: For this ordaining Elders in every Church by *Paul* and *Barnabas*, was done in their return to the places where they had preached the Goſpel, and made Diſciples before; and they returned to them to confirm them, and to ordain Elders among them, as appears by the two precedent verſes compared with the Text it ſelf. Beſides, St. *Luke* did not write this Hiſtory till after the Apoſtles had thus ordained Elders in the Churches mentioned by him, ſo that they were indeed Churches then when he wrote thoſe words, and it was proper for him to ſtile them ſo, tho it ſhould be ſuppoſed they had been none before they had Elders ordained in them. So that this Text can be no proof of that for which the Doctor doth alledge it.

QUERY

QUERY XII.

WHether from the reaſon of the extent *and Latitude of Viſible Church-Memberſhip and Communion which has been diſcourſed of, the great uſefulneſs of a National ſettlement or Conſtitution for the publick exerciſe of the Worſhip of God in all parts of a Nation profeſſing Chriſtianity, may not fairly be inferred and concluded?*

Now the reaſon why Viſible Church-Memberſhip & Communion are better in reſpect of their due extenſiveneſs, than they would be if the terms and conditions of enjoying thoſe Priviledges were limited and reſtrained to the ſame terms which the enjoyment of Inviſible Church Memberſhip and Communion are, is this, *viz.* becauſe theſe Priviledges under ſuch an *extent and latitude*, tend more to the propagation of the Chriſtian Religion, and the increaſe of the number of thoſe

who shall be saved, than they would or could do if they were limitted and restrained to the same terms and conditions of enjoyment as Invisible Church Membership and Communion are. This hath been shew'd in our tenth Inquiry.

And it is for the same reason that it is better that the exercise of Gods Publick Worship should be set up in all parts of a Nation professing Christianity by a *National Authority*; and that all such Professors should be thereby obliged to frequent it, than it is to leave all such to their own liberty to promote and frequent it, or to forbear and neglect to do so, as the way called *Independency* does. For the National way tends more to propagate and promote the knowledge and practice of Christian Religion, and the Salvation of Souls, than the Congregational way does, and therefore must needs be abundantly better. That it does so, is too apparent to be denied by any that have but common reason when these things

things following are but duly conſidered.

1. Better proviſion is made by a publick eſtabliſhment for the inſtruction of ſuch a Nation in the way of Salvation, than can reaſonably be expected without it. Unleſs proviſion were made by publick Authority for the maintenance of a Goſpel Miniſtry in all parts of a Nation, there would certainly be a greater want of a publick Miniſtry in many places of it, than by reaſon of ſuch a publick proviſion there is. Would people, think we, of themſelves in all places of a Nation provide a better maintainance for the Miniſtry of the Goſpel among them, if left wholly to themſelves, than there is made by publick Authority? If they would, how comes it to paſs that thoſe places are generally worſt ſupplied with Miniſters where the Publick has made leaſt proviſion for their maintainance? And generally where there is the greateſt failure in this, there is the leaſt face of Religion, and greateſt hazard of mens Souls.

Where there is no Vision the people perish, saith *Solomon*, Prov. 29. 18. *And the people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*, saith the Prophet, *Hos.* 4.6.

2. If the people should be all left to themselves to chuse what Ministers they please without any publick approbation and allowance of some appointed by publick Authority to judg of their fitness, many would be in danger of chusing men of erronious Principles, and such as would corrupt the minds of men. The consequence of which would be great opposition and contention between the Orthodox and the Erronious, and making of Parties, and endless strife, to the destruction of Peace and Charity, and to the hurt of mens souls thereby, and to the great dishonour of our Religion, and to the hinderance of its good effects upon the minds and lives of men.

3. Altho the Publick Worship should be set up in all places of a Christian Nation, yet if men should be

be under no Obligation by Law to attend it, it would doubtleſs be much more neglected by many, than when there is. But the more men are brought to attend the means by which God works Grace in them, tho it be but by virtue of the Law they are brought to it, yet the more hope and probability there is of their being ſavingly wrought upon.

4. It whoſoever ſhall pretend himſelf qualified for it, ſhould have liberty to gather a Congregation, it would be the leaving open a door of opportunity to Seducers to ſubvert mens Souls, and to fill a Nation with variety of Sects, and the miſchievous effects of them. And yet ſo it would be if there were no publick Government in the Church to reſtrain men: And to this day we feel the very ſad effects of ſo great a liberty ſometime indulged.

Thus we ſee for what reaſon true Religion ſhould be promoted by National Authority. And as to matter of fact it is ſufficiently known, that thoſe

who have had the Supream Power in all Nations have been wont always to promote by their Authority that which they have thought to be the true Religion whether it hath been true or false: And whence comes this but from the light and Law of Nature, which directs men to use the Power and Interest they have to further the Worshipping of the God whom they serve. And indeed Christians of all persuasions are willing enough to have the Civil Power to exert it self in furthering their own way of Worshipping God: The People of *New England,* who once were as much for Liberty of Conscience as any, yet soon found it convenient to incorporate the Civil Power with the Ecclesiastick for the defence and propagation of their Religion.

Now as the great usefulness of a National establishment for the purposes aforesaid, does sufficiently appear from the reason and nature of the thing it self, and has the light and law of Nature on its side; so it is not destitute of

of countenance from ſupernatural Revelation.

1. When Almighty God ſaid to *Abraham, Thou ſhalt be a Father of many Nations, a Father of many Nations have I made thee,* Gen. 17. He declared his intention of Reforming the world by degrees from Idolatry and falſe Worſhip in a *National way,* if we may judg what he intended to do afterwards, by the firſt inſtance he gave of his performance herein; and if we may judg of the true meaning of this as of other Divine Predictions, by the after Events which anſwer them in point of fact; which yet is the beſt and moſt approved way of underſtanding Predictions, when ſuch events take place.

Almighty God made *Abraham* firſt a Father of a Nation which iſſued out of his own Loyns. For when his Poſterity, who by Circumciſion Covenanted to take *Abrahams* God only for their God, grew very numerous in *Egypt,* God brought them out thence that they might worſhip him

openly and publickly in a National way. And by this means, and by his visible owning them for his people by extraordinary favours shew'd them, he designed to make himself more known to the rest of the world, to be the only true God, and to be so acknowledged.

Now in that *Abraham* was promised to be the Father of many Nations, it was not so much for that God intended that many Nations should descend out of his Loyns by natural generation, as that many Nations in time should, after his example, come to acknowledge and worship him only for their God as the only true God. For so St. *Paul* understood this promise of God to *Abraham*, when he makes *Abraham*, in respect of his believing in the true God, to be the Father of all Nations that should be of the same belief, as well those of the *Uncircumcision* as that which was of the *Circumcision*, *as it is written*, saith he, *I have made thee a Father of many Nations*, Rom. 4. 16, 17. And it was

in this ſpiritual or religious reſpect and ſenſe that St. *Paul* had before in this Chapter aſſerted *Abraham* to be the Father of all that ſhall believe in the true God as he did, in all Nations, as well thoſe who were never Circumciſed, as thoſe that were, *Ver.* 11, 12. And thus God made *Abraham* a *bleſſing* to the World as he promiſed he would, and a Father of Nations, not only for that the Meſſias was to be born of one deſcended from him; for ſo he was born of one that deſcended from *Abrahams* Predeceſſors and Succeſſors, as well as from *Abraham:* But he was a *bleſſing* to the World, and the *Father of Nations* by being made by God the Head, the beginning and great example of reforming the World from Misbelief and Idolatry, and other conſequent evils, ſo as his Progenitors were not. To encourage which work in the world, God inveſted *Abraham*, that led the way herein, with the honour of being counted the Father of Nations, and a publick bleſſing to the world, both in himſelf and in his Seed.

2. That

2. That God did design farther to carry on the reformation of the world from Misbelief and Idolatry in a National way, and in that way to bring the world by degrees to the Worship of the true God only, appears by other Predictions of the Prophets, such as that, *Isa.* 55.5. *Behold thou shalt call a Nation that thou knowst not, and Nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee.* Chap 52. 15. *He shall sprinkle many Nations, the Kings shall shut their mouths at him,* Chap. 49. 23. *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their Queens thy nursing mothers.* Zech. 8. 22. *Many people and strong Nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts.* Chap. 2. 11. *Many Nations shall be joyned to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people.* The formal nature of mens Visible Church-Membership consists in their being *visibly joyned to the Lord,* as I have shewed; and therefore when many Nations are *Nationally joyned* to the Lord, they may well be counted Nationally his people, or Churches.

And

And Nations are then Nationally joyned to the Lord, when Nations do incorporate the Chriſtian Religion with their Civil Government, and make it part of the National Government, as the Eccleſiaſtical Polity of the Jews together with the Judicial Law of that Commonwealth was. And by this means the Chriſtian Religion becomes commodiouſly and with more certainty to be tranſmitted to future Generations in a Nation, as well as practiſed for the time being by that which is exiſtent; juſt as the Jews Religion was. *For he eſtabliſhed a teſtimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Iſrael, which he commanded our Fathers that they ſhould make them known to their Children: That the Generation to come might know them, even the Children which ſhould be born: who ſhould ariſe and declare them to their Children,* Pſal. 78. 5, 6.

Thoſe Propheſies fore-mentioned concerning Nations being joyned to the Lord, referring to times under the

the New Testament, the event of them, as we shall see, will shew that they foretold Christian Nations their being joyned to the Lord *Nationally*, or in the course of National Government. And the nature of Events which answer to divine Predictions, are, I think, the best and most approved Expositions of those Prophesies when they are fulfilled, and the best measure which can be taken for the understanding of them.

Two things then would be enquired into touching the Events we speak of.

1. What, and which they are which we may reasonably pitch upon for those Events.

2. How we may be assured from some Scriptures of the New Testament, that those Events of Providence which we shall pitch upon, are indeed of that sort and kind which the Prophesies we speak of point us to.

I. For the first of these, we have very great reason to believe that those National Reformations from Paganism

and

and Judaiſm, and thoſe National Reformations from Popery which have been made in the world ſince the Chriſtian Religion was firſt ſet on foot, and which ſhall yet farther be made, are thoſe very *Events*, or the chiefeſt part of them, which the Propheſies, before ſpecified, point us to. We cannot ſay that any Reformation of either kind has been National, untill it has been back'd by National Authority. Its true, there have been great multitudes of men during the ſtanding of the Roman Empire as Pagan, that were recovered from Judaiſm and Paganiſm to Chriſtianity; and there were many famous Churches of ſuch: But I thiuk no one Nation, as ſuch, could be ſaid to be joyned to the Lord in all that time, tho out of many Kindreds, Tongues, and Nations, there were many, very many both men and women that were. But Nations then became Nationally the Lords when the Chriſtians in them were owned as ſuch, and required to behave themſelves as ſuch by the Supreme Authority and ruling

ruling powers of those Nations; tho there might possibly be many in those Nations at the same time, which yet did not so much as pretend themselves to be Christians.

2. But let us inquire in the second place what assurance we have from any of the holy Writings of the New Testament, that those National Reformations from Paganism and Popery that have been made in New Testament times, and which shall further be made in other Nations, are those Events of Providence which the Prophesies, touching National conversions, point at. And to this end let us observe,

First, That at what time the Supreme Power of the Roman Empire fell into Christian hands, and was imployed for the destruction and rooting out Pagan Idolatry, and for the setting up and establishing the Publick Worship of Almighty God and his Son Jesus Christ, throughout its Dominions: Then it was that this Kingdom or Dominion became Gods

Kingdom

Kingdom in Scripture account. For to this great turn of Affairs in the judgment of the moſt approved Interpreters of the *Revelations* does that joyful acclamations refer which we have ſet down in *Chap.* 12. 10. *Now is come Salvation, and Strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the Power of his Chriſt,* At which time alſo, *the great Dragon, called the Devil and Satan, was caſt out, and his Angels with him,* ver. 9. that is, thoſe Rulers ſupreme and ſubordinate, who had till then done his work in promoting the Intereſt of the Kingdom of darkneſs by ſupporting Idolatry, and perſecuting Chriſtians; as it was ſaid, *The Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon,* Rev. 2. 10.

But was not Gods Kingdom come into the Empire till now that the Government was made Chriſtian by the Emperour being a Chriſtian? Were there not many great and famous Chriſtian Churches within the Empire while the Government of it was Pagan in reſpect of Worſhip? Why, yes there

there was. Why then was not the Kingdom of God and the Power of his Christ said to be come till the Government in the hands of *Constantine* the Emperour became Christian? Why should this Song, *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ*, be applied to this great turn of Affairs in the Empire, rather than to that when the Preaching of the Gospel was first set on foot in it, and many Christian Congregations erected? There can no other reason hereof be given, I conceive, but that all the while the Government of the Empire, in reference to Religion, was engaged for the upholding of the Visible Kingdom of the Devil, so far, and in this respect it might be said to be his Kingdom, to be sure it could not be said to be Gods so far as it was imployed against him. But when the Government of it became Christian, and engaged it self in throwing down the Kingdom of darkness, the Worship of false Gods, and in setting up and establishing the Publick

Publick Worſhip of the true God, and the Chriſtian Religion; then and from that time in this Scripture account, that Kingdom or Empire became the Kingdom of God and of his Chriſt, tho many of the Inhabitants of it continued ſtill for a time at leaſt, Idolaters as to their profeſſion and private practice.

So that when, and ſo long as the Government of the Empire in its conſtitution in reference to Religion continued idolatrous, ſo long the Empire it ſelf was not owned for Gods Kingdom, tho there were many *Chriſtian Churches* in it: but when once the Government of it became Chriſtian, it was then owned for Gods Kingdom, tho many of the Inhabitants of it were no Chriſtians. From whence it follows, & may naturally be inferred, that in Scripture Notion Kingdoms are ſaid to be Gods Kingdoms upon the account of a National Reformation from Idolatry and falſe worſhip, when ever it is made by the publick Government and authority of ſuch Nations.

But now after this Reformation

from Paganism by the Imperial Authority and Power, in process of time there came *a falling away* in the Empire from the purity of Christian Worship, unto a Worship of a mixt nature, made up partly of a Worship given to the true God, and partly of a Worship given unto Creatures which is due only unto God; which was done by the prevailing of the *Papal* Apostacy. And the *ten Kings* mentioned *Rev.* 17. into whose hands the Empire became divided, *gave their power and strength unto the Beast* for the support of this impure Worship and Pagan-like Superstition.

But after this had been done and continued in for several hundreds of years, several of those Kingdoms and Principalities, which had before given their power and strength unto the Beast, fell off, and reassumed that power and strength, and then devoted it to the service of God in reforming their Dominions from Popery, and in restoring the Publick Worship of God throughout their Dominions without any Idolatrous mixture. Upon which great turn of Affairs,

fairs, thoſe *great voices in heaven* follow-ed, ſaying, *The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Chriſt*, Rev. 11.15. For this joyful acclamation is here brought in upon occaſion of the Reſurrection and Exaltation of the Witneſſes in this Chapter ſpoken of, and of the fall of a tenth part of the City ſpiritually called *Sodom and Egypt*. By which we underſtand that the fall of part of the Papal Power and Juriſdiction, and the riſe and exaltation of the Witneſſes, were *contemporary*; and that this great alteration and change in ſeveral Nations, made thoſe Nations which were but Kingdoms of *this world* before, to become the Kingdoms *of our Lord, and of his Chriſt*.

Now there are theſe two reaſons to induce us to believe that this Reſurrection of the Witneſſes, and the fall of a tenth part of the City, refer unto the great Reformation from Popery, which was made many years ſince in ſeveral Kingdoms and Principalities in Chriſtendom, and conſequently that

the acclamation aforesaid (the Kingdoms of this world, are become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ) refer unto the same time and thing.

1. Because we have no where so great, so notable, and remarkable an alteration as that Reformation made in Christendom, foretold and particularly pointed at in this Book of Prophesies, if it were not in this. And yet it seems incredible that so great and famous an alteration of Affairs in the Popish State, and in the condition of the Church as that Reformation made, should not in special be pointed at somewhere in this Book of Prophesies. This reason the Reverend Dr. *More* hath furnished me with in his Appendage annexed to his Exposition of *Daniels* Prophesies, *p.* 291. With whose Exposition, of what I here alledge out of *Rev.* 11. I am abundantly satisfied as I find it in the foresaid Appendage, and in his Book entituled, *The Revelation of St.* John *unveiled*.

2. The

2. The matters which fell out and were tranſacted in and by that Reformaton, did exactly anſwer to that which was foretold by that Propheſie touching the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes, and the fall of the Popiſh power and intereſt in a conſiderable part of the Popes Juriſdiction. For then there was a *Political* Reſurrection of that ſort of men who had been *Politically* ſlain, and a long time dead, for crying down Popery. And this was done when ſuch were put into publick imployment in all Reformed Nations. And at the ſame time on the other hand, there was a *Political* ſlaughter of *thouſands of men*, when all thoſe that had been in Office and holy Orders in their Church, were put down in all thoſe Nations that then became reformed. And this reaſon methinks ſhould convince any unprejudiced man, that our firſt happy National Reformation from Popery in ſeveral Nations, was the fulfilling of that Propheſie touching the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes we ſpeak of.

And if it were, then I cannot see how any can deny but that those voices in heaven which presently followed thereupon, did declare that those Nations which while Popish, were but Kingdoms of this World, yet by their National reformation from Popery they became the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.

But if the Prophesie concerning the Resurrection of the Witnesses should refer unto another time and turn, and not to that of the first National Reformation from Popery, yet that saying, *The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*, upon the occasion there foregoing, will no less serve to prove that Nations by their National Reformation from Popery, became the Kingdoms of God, than it would in case that Prophesie had referred unto the first National Reformation from Popery. For the Resurrection of the Witnesses, the Earthquake, the fall of a tenth part of the City, and *Political* slaughter of *seven thousand of names of men*, must

muſt needs import a great alteration of Affairs and National Reformation, whereſoever and whenſoever they fall out, be it ſooner or later; becauſe upon it we ſee ſome of thoſe Nations which were but Kingdoms of the world before, do then become the Kingdoms of God. And if Nations of the world *indefinitely*, become the Kingdoms of God by being reformed from Popery or Paganiſm, ſo as to make the right Chriſtian Doctrine and Worſhip, the Religion of thoſe Nations by National Authority; then the ſame is true of *all Nations* which are ſo reformed at any time, and conſequently of thoſe which led the way, and have been firſt in ſuch Reformation. And thus our proof appears every way pregnant.

To conclude this matter then; when we find that in all times and places in point of fact, that as faſt as the Sovereign and Supreme Power in each Nation has fallen into Orthodox Chriſtian hands, ſo faſt thoſe Nations have become reformed from Paganiſm

or Popery by the Governing Power of those Nations: And when we find again that by such Reformations, those Nations have become Gods Kingdoms as contradistinguished from the Kingdoms of this world; great reason we have to believe these to be the very and true Events, and the fulfilling of such ancient Predictions of the Prophets, as those which foretold that many Nations should be joyned to the Lord, and be his People.

It is true, it was a great while after Christianity began, before it became National by National Authority, as it was long after *Abraham* and his Posterity became the People of God by the Covenant of Circumcision, before they and their Religion became National: And as the one was in bondage four hundred years under the *Egyptian* Tyranny, so were the Christians three hundred years under the Tyranny of the Pagan *Roman* Emperours, before they and their Religion became National by National Authority. But as the Christian Religion and

and Worſhip as reformed, has ſince the Reformation been carried on principally in a National way, ſo I doubt not but that it will be carried on farther, and more Nations come to be reformed from Popery, Infidelity, and Paganiſm, until at laſt that ancient Propheſie of the Angel by *Daniel* comes to be fulfilled, which tells us, *That the Kingdom, and Dominion, and the greatneſs of the Kingdom under the whole heaven ſhall be given to the people of the Saints of the moſt High, whoſe Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom, and all Dominions* (or Rulers as it is in the Margin) *ſhall ſerve and obey him*, Dan. 7. 27. And that alſo in *Pſal.* 72, 11. *All Kings ſhall fall down before him; all Nations ſhall ſerve him.*

And now from what hath been repreſented to us in the foreſaid Propheſie of St. *John*, *Rev.* 11. we may briefly obſerve theſe two or three things.

1. That notwithſtanding any *leſſer defects* in Doctrine, Worſhip, or Government Eccleſiaſtical, in any of the National

National Reformations from Popery which have been made, yet after and becauſe ſuch Reformation has been made, thoſe Nations are in Scripture account eſteemed the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt, as oppoſed to the Kingdoms of this world. Which ſeems to me to fall ſomewhat hard upon ſuch as *ſeparate* from the publick Worſhip of God eſtabliſhed in ſuch Nations by National Authority, in a way of National Reformation; and on thoſe more eſpecially who ſeparate from that Worſhip for that very reaſon, becauſe enjoyned by National Authority. It likewiſe falls hard upon them alſo who diſeſteem, or leſs eſteem a *National Miniſtry*, becauſe it is National, or made ſuch according to a National eſtabliſhment. Theſe ſeem to be of one mind, and Almighty God of another, when he eſteems Nations to be joyned to him, and to be his People by that, for which they ſeparate.

Their pretence that in the Apoſtles times, and for three hundred years after,

after, the Affairs of the Church were carried on only in a free Congregational way in greater or leſſer voluntary Aſſociations, and therefore they ought to be ſo now, ſeems very inconſiderable. Becauſe what was done in that kind then, was done by way of neceſſity, becauſe they had not opportunity of a better. Not but that they long'd for, and pray'd for ſuch Kings as would uſe their Authority and Power for the propagation and furtherance of the Chriſtian Religion, as well as for the defence of it, and the Profeſſors of it. And they eſteemed it no ſmall favour from God, when at laſt they obtained it in *Conſtantine*, a Chriſtian *Ceſar*, who uſed that Power of his for the eſtabliſhing the Chriſtian Religion and Worſhip of the only true God, and for the ordering and regulating many things relating to the more commodious and orderly carrying on the miniſtration of the Goſpel and the Worſhip of God. And therefore the people of God then exiſtent in the Empire, are brought

brought in by the Spirit of Propheſie, expreſſing themſelves thus upon that occaſion: *Now is come ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt,* as I ſhew'd before, *Rev.* 12.10.

2. It may be juſtly queſtioned, whether it be worth the while for men to diſpute againſt the being of a National Church in New Teſtament times, conſidering that in the New Teſtament, Nations reformed from Paganiſm and Popery, are ſtiled Gods Kingdoms: And conſidering likewiſe, that the Scripture ſtiles the ſame people, and in the ſame reſpect, ſometimes the *Kingdom* of God, and ſometimes his *Church*. And therefore it ſhould ſeem no more improper to call a Chriſtian Nation a Church of God, than it is to call it a Kingdom of God, which yet the Scripture ſtiles ſo.

3. It may be obſerved yet farther, That the Kingdoms or Nations which have been reformed from Popery, were before ſuch reformation was made,

made, *but Kingdoms of this world*, notwithſtanding much of what pertains to the Chriſtian Religion, was then owned and profeſſed in them. The Spirit of God by whom the book of *Revelations* was indited, we ſee ſtiles them ſo in their *unreformed* ſtate: *The Kingdoms of this world are become, &c.* Yet they then in their unreformed ſtate, Worſhipped the true God, and his Son Chriſt Jeſus: They owned the holy Scriptures for the Word of God, and uſed the ſame Creeds which the Reformed Churches themſelves uſe; and yet we ſee they are in that ſtate ſtiled by the Spirit of God, but Kingdoms of this world, when as under their reformed ſtate, they are ſaid to be the Kingdoms of God and of his Chriſt.

Like as Almighty God for the like reaſon eſteemed the Nation of the Jews, who had been his own Church and People, but as *Ethiopians unto him*, Amos 9.7. and told them by another Prophet, *Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God*, Hoſ. 1. 10.

For

For tho they had his Ordinances among them, and boasted of their Temple-Worship, crying, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these*; yet at the same time *they burnt Incense unto Baal, and walked after other Gods*, Jer. 7. they divided their Worship between the true God and *Baal*, and did *swear by the Lord and by Malcham*, Zeph. 1. 5. And upon this account it was that God said of them by his Prophet, *they are unto me as a speckled bird*, of a Religion of several colours, *Jer.* 12. 9. For this spiritual Whoredom especially it was, that Almighty God who had once espoused that people to himself, gave them a Bill of Divorce at last, brake up house, turned them out of doors, and sent them out of his Land, untill they should repent and reform. And if we compare these things with the spiritual whoredom wherewith Mystical *Babilon* is charged, and for which, with other heinous crimes, she is threatned in this Book of *Revelations*, it will not

not be at all hard to conceive why Nations while Popiſh, are ſtiled and eſteemed but Kingdoms of this world.

And this, if there were no other, is argument enough to prevail with all ſuch as would not be diſowned by God, to be none, or to become none of their Communion, who are thus diſowned by him.

And thus we have ſeen how both from the light and law of Nature, the reaſon of the thing, and from divine Revelation alſo, the great expediency at leaſt of the publick exerciſe of Gods Worſhip in the way of National eſtabliſhment, is warranted, and approved of.

This then may be a caution to men, who live in any ſuch reformed Nation as we have diſcourſed of, and as ours is, to take heed of acting in matters Eccleſiaſtical, or pertaining to Church Communion, as if they lived in a Popiſh or Pagan Nation, by diſowning and by ſeparating from the National way of Worſhip, leſt thereby they diſcoun-

discountenance and disparage what God approves of, and disown that for which God owns such a Nation for his Kingdom. It is true, the Primitive Christians, who lived in, Pagan Countries, and those since which have lived in Popish, have been necessitated in duty to be separate in their Christian Communion from their National Worship, as much as they were obliged not to be Idolaters. But there is a great difference between false Worship, and defects in that which is true. The best Church Constitution, and the best Church Administration, which have men not divinely inspired for the ordering of them, are liable to humane defects. And if humane defects even in Gods Worship, were not to be endured for the sake of Communion in the Worship it self, there could no such thing as Church Communion be enjoyed among Christians, because we cannot say there is any in this imperfect state in which we are, without defects.

But

But then the queſtion will be what defects are to be indured in Gods Worſhip, rather than Communion in it ſhould be forſaken? and what are intolerable, and for the ſake of which Communion in the Worſhip is to be declined?

And here it ſeems to me impoſſible warrantably to determine any defects intolerable which do not alter the nature of the Worſhip, and make it become falſe Worſhip; that do not deſtroy or defeat the ends for which true Worſhip ſerves. Who is he that will undertake to determine for what defects, which are conſiſtent with Gods true Worſhip, Communion in that Worſhip is to be declined?

But then the next queſtion will be, How we ſhall know what Worſhip is true, and what is falſe? And ſo what Worſhip it is that Communion in it is to be declined, and what not?

Now that's falſe Worſhip which is given to a wrong Object, or to that which is not God. And that again is

alſe Worſhip, tho given to God the right Object, when that which is not true matter of Worſhip, is given to him as matter of Worſhip.

But how ſhall we know when Worſhip is falſe in reſpect of the matter? Worſhip is then falſe in reſpect of the matter, when that is performed to God as required by him, which is not ſo. For ſo we are taught, *Mat.* 15.9. *In vain do they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of men.* That's a vain or falſe Worſhip, when humane Ordinances are impoſed, and obſerved *as* the Commands of God; and this is the *adding to his Word* alſo, which is forbidden, *Deut.* 4.2.

But then there is a great difference between theſe and the uſe of things in or about Gods Worſhip which are not of the Eſſence of it, nor uſed under the Notion of being commanded by God, but profeſſedly uſed as things indifferent in their own nature, and only as matters of Humane Prudence; and for this reaſon cannot juſtly be charged to be falſe Worſhip.

There

There is a great difference likewiſe between the Eſſence of Worſhip, and the Accidents of it, between the matter and ſubſtance of it, and the circumſtances of external adminiſtration. There is not the liberty of varying in the one as there is in the other. As for inſtance, we are not left at like liberty in the choice of the Object, and matter of Prayer and Thankſgiving, as we are in the external manner of addreſs, nor limited by expreſsneſs of Rule in the one, as we are in the other. We are expreſly commanded to pray to God in the name of Chriſt, and have expreſs direction for all the ſubſtantial parts or matter of Prayer, as Confeſſion, Supplication, Petition, Thankſgiving, and Interceſſion; but whether in a ſet Form, or without, whether with the uſe of a Book, or without, whether in one or more Prayers at a time, or whether kneeling or ſtanding, is not determined; but in theſe we are left at liberty to uſe or chuſe as Circumſtances ſhall direct or require. And

the like may be said concerning other parts of Gods Worship, Baptism, and the Lords Supper. The Ordinances themselves are particularly commanded, but so are not several Circumstances relating to the external administration of them, but are left to the Prudence of Church Guides and Governours under general Rules. And altho one way of external administration of Worship may be better than another, and that may be chosen as best by such as have power of chusing, which yet is not best in it self; yet so long as it does not alter the nature of the Worship it self, nor defeat the ends and uses to which an external administration serves, it can by no means be duly esteemed to be false Worship. The worst that can be said of such an administration of Worship which is not simply unlawful in it self, but only inferiour in goodness unto the best, is only this, That it is inexpedient, when a better might have been had, if they had thought so by whom the choice was made.

Now

Now ſuppoſe then, that when the happy Work of National Reformation from Popery was laid and begun by the great Inſtruments of it, (whoſe memory is bleſſed, and name precious to good men.) Suppoſe, I ſay, they may poſſibly have been miſtaken in the betterneſs of ſome things in the external manner and form of adminiſtration of Publick Worſhip; yet ſo long as ſuch things do not amount unto any falſe Worſhip, but are only Imperfections in the true, the queſtion will be, Whether it be prudent and becoming good men in this caſe to ſeek amendment of thoſe ſuppoſed defects, in any other way than in the ſame National courſe of proceeding by which the Reformation was firſt wrought. And the reaſon is,

1. Becauſe God hath owned this way of Reformation by declaring Nations upon account of it to be his Kingdoms, which we cannot ſay he hath done upon account of any Reformation wrought in them any other way without this.

2. Because when such a Reformation is attempted in a Nation already reformed, in opposition to the Reformation established by Law, it cannot reasonably be expected, but that more hurt will be done thereby, than good obtained, as we have found by sad experience in this Nation. For by this means a Nation comes to be divided against it self, Party against Party, to the engendering *disaffection, envying, and strife*, and where these are, there is (as St. *James* hath told us) *confusion, and every evil work.* And by this means there is a very sensible decay and loss of that wherein the very life and spirit of Religion in men lies. But the Reformation in the external part of Worship, which is sought after in this extraordinary way, is in things but of such a nature, as wherein the life and spirit of Religion in men is little concerned one way or other, either as to loss or gain. And therefore to chuse to seek this sort of Reformation in such a way, as by which the loss was likely to be

far

far greater than the gain, and has ſince proved to be ſo, is a thing doubtleſs which cannot become the wiſdom of good men.

Now that the Reformation in the external part of Worſhip which is purſued in the extraordinary and undue way we ſpeak of, is in things but of ſuch a nature as wherein the ſpirit and life of Religion in men is little concerned one way or other, as to loſs or gain, appears by this, *viz.* Becauſe there have been, and are very many, who have lived under the uſe of that external Mode of Worſhip without any ſuch Reformation of it as is contended for, in whom the ſpirit and life of Religion has been found as much (as may well be preſumed) as in any other who have uſed any other Mode of Worſhip different from it. Not that I am againſt mens ſeeking that which they apprehend to be beſt in theſe matters, provided it be in the National way, and in ſuch a manner as that more hurt be not done by the way and manner of

seeking it, than good can be acquired in their way of obtaining it by separation.

3. It is becoming the wisdom of good men to seek the amendment they desire, by complying as far as they can with what is already established; because by so doing, and by seasonable and humble application to the *Legislative* Powers of the Nation, they may in all reason sooner obtain what is reasonable and meet to be granted, than by separating from it, and setting up another way in opposition to it. And the reason is, because the one is apt to beget a good opinion of them, and of the innocency and goodness of their intention in what they desire and seek: Whereas the other tends to exasperate and provoke, and to beget an ill opinion of them, and a jealousie of their designs, in the minds of those from whom they expect ease and relief in what is matter of grievance to them: And that which does that, is no good way of obtaining from them. *Solomon's* wise advice is,

If

If the Spirit of the Ruler riſe up againſt thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences. Eccleſ. 10.4.

QUERY XIII.

WHerein may Catholick Church Communion conſiſt? And how, and by what means is it beſt preſerved?

To clear our way in this Inquiry it will be convenient to take notice of the difference that is between the *Union* of the Catholick Church, and the *Communion* of it. The Union of the Catholick Church conſiſts in the ſame *Relation* which all the Members of that one Body bear to Chriſt the Head of it, and to one another as fellow-members: But the Communion of this ſpiritual Corporation conſiſts in a mutual performance of thoſe Chriſtian Duties and Offices to which they are engaged by virtue of that relation. By that Relation in which their

their Union conſiſts they come to have a greater intereſt in one another than they had before their incorporation into that body; and by it they come under new duties to one another to which they were not obliged before; But their Communion conſiſts much in a mutual diſcharge of thoſe duties towards one another, and in an improvement of that intereſt for the benefit of one another, and the good of the whole by their mutual intercourſe in ſpiritual affairs. The Union of the whole, which is made by one Baptiſm, or the Baptiſmal Covenant, reſpects the *being* of the Church: But Catholick Communion reſpects its *well-being* by its increaſe in wiſdom, goodneſs, and comfort.

There is indeed a Catholick Church *Unity* by Communion as well as there is another which comes by Relation; but this Unity of Communion flows from that which is made by a Relation common to the whole.

Having

Having thus briefly conſidered how Catholick Communion differs from Catholick Union, I ſhall now proceed to ſhew a little more particularly wherein or in what Catholick Communion doth conſiſt. And we may beſt know what it is, and wherein it doth conſiſt by the account we have of it as practiſed in the Catholick Church when it firſt became Chriſtian. And this account we have in theſe words, *Acts* 2.42. *And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles doctrine, and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* By which deſcription we ſee it conſiſted in their conſent and agreement in three things, *Faith, Worſhip, Fellowſhip.*

1. In their agreeing in the ſame Faith; they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles *Doctrine*; that is, in the belief of it, in attendance to it, and practice of it. From the ſame faith, being common to all Chriſtians, it is called, the *common faith*, Tit.1.4. the *one faith*, Eph.4.5. and their agreement in it, is ſtiled, *Unity in the faith*, Eph. 4.13.

2.In

2. In their agreement in the same Worship; *breaking of bread and prayers.* This Catholick Church in its beginning is said to have continued *with one accord* in Prayer and Supplication, *Acts* 1. 14. And on the day of *Penticost* they were all with *one accord in one place*, when the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them. And when their number so increased that they could not all perform this Publick Worship together in one place, but in several distinct Assemblies, called particular Churches, yet their *agreement* in the same Worship, made their Communion in it but *one Communion*, tho performed in several Assemblies.

For altho these Assemblies be never so far distant from one another, yet so long as they all agree in the same Worship, the distance of place can no more hinder their Communion from being *one*, than their being baptized in several distant places, can hinder the Relation to one another contracted thereby, from being *one*, when it is common

common to all the Members. We account all thoſe to be of the Communion of the Church of *Rome* at the ſame time, and in the ſame acts in which they hold their Local Communion in ſeveral diſtant Nations, ſo long as they all agree in the ſame corrupt Worſhip. And there is the ſame reaſon for the Unity of the Communion in Worſhip of all Orthodox Aſſemblies in all Nations. So that I take this for an unqueſtionable truth, That it is mens agreement in the ſame Principles of Communion, be they good or bad, that makes their Communion but one, tho the particular acts of it are performed by them in many thouſand diſtant places.

And now it is by the Union of Relation by the Baptiſmal Covenant, and the Unity of Communion by agreement in the Principles of the Worſhip wherein they have Communion, that all Orthodox Chriſtians make one great Houſe or Temple of God in the world, in which he is openly worſhipped, and publickly acknowledged

knowledged to be what he is, the one only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in opposition to all false Gods, *Ephes.* 2. 21. *In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord.* This is that house which is called *Christs own house*, Heb. 3. 6. and that *House of God over which Christ is said to be High Priest*, Heb. 10. 21. And particular Churches in reference to this one house, are but as several Apartments in it, which all together make up one great house of God.

And in this house of his God dwells, and therein manifesteth himself to his People after a more special manner than he does to the world; 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *Ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Here Almighty God meets with them, and communes with them, and receives their addresses; and here he entertains them with the *fatness of his house*, the Ordinances of the Gospel, and the benign

benign influences and comfortable preſence of his Spirit in the uſe of them. In this way the whole Church in their ſeveral Aſſemblies have Communion with their Head Chriſt Jeſus, and one with another, by partaking in common of the ſpiritual benefits communicated by the Lord, and in aſſiſting in common in the Worſhip, Adoration, and Thankſgiving which the Church renders him for the glory and tranſcendent perfections of his nature and being, and returns him for all the bleſſings and benefits they receive from him.

And the more all Chriſtians are agreed in their worſhipping of God, and in their Communion with him, the more they honour him, and the more they pleaſe him, and make themſelves the more capable of receiving all good things from him in the greater abundance. If the *agreement but of two of them touching any thing they ſhall ask*, hath his promiſe of granting it, (*Mat.* 18. 19.) what might not be expected from him if the

the whole Church were of one heart and one soul, as they were at the first in matters of their Communion.

3. Catholick Communion consisteth also in the mutual assistances which Christians give to, and receive one from another, couched in that one word *Fellowship* in the description of Catholick Communion, *Acts* 2. 42. *And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine, and Fellowship,* &c. The same word which in our Version is here translated *Fellowship*, is by the *Dutch* in their Version translated *Communion.* And according to Dr. *Hammond* it signifies both to *communicate*, and to *participate*, to *distribute*, and to *receive.*

So that according to the nature of Christian Communion, every Member of the whole Church is or ought to be useful and serviceable to the whole Community of Christians in general, and to every Christian in particular, so far as they can, in the place and rank in which the Providence

dence of God hath ſet them. The which if duly obſerved by all as it ought to be, the ſame perſons that thus communicate and contribute aſſiſtance to others, would be receiving back again from the whole, and from every Member in particular, the like ſuccour ſervice and aſſiſtance as opportunity ſerves, as they themſelves had contributed to them: As a Chriſtian is to ſerve every fellow-Chriſtian, ſo according to the ſame Law every one is to ſerve him. This is that the Apoſtle means when he ſays, *By love ſerve one another*, Gal. 5. 13. And this *giving and receiving* aſſiſtance, the ſame Apoſtle calls *communicating with him*, Phil. 4. 15.

If this Catholick Communion were but duly maintained among all Chriſtians, how like a heaven upon earth would the Catholick Church be? And how happy would they be even now for the preſent that are of it? And how would the Inhabitants of the world that are not of it, then flow into it? And yet for Chriſtians thus

to exchange Offices of love with one another, is nothing more than what we are all obliged to by the Royal Law of Love; *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* For if I am hereby bound to love every Neighbour as my self, so is every Neighbour obliged by it to love me as they love themselves. And how delightful a commerce would this be, if the Christian Church were but so happy as to hit on it!

The particular duties and offices of love in which this part of Christian Communion does consist, are such as these; the instructing and exhorting one another, the watching over and admonishing one another, the strengthening the feeble minded, the visiting and comforting the afflicted, the relieving one anothers wants, the bearing on anothers burdens, the having the same care one for another, and the like. Together with these we may reckon the yielding and allowing to every one the liberty of sharing in the common priviledge of enjoying Com-

Communion in Goſpel-Ordinances and Worſhip, ſo long as they have not made themſelves uncapable of it by drawing on themſelves deſervedly the Cenſures of the Church, nor are otherwiſe naturally uncapable of the end and uſe for which thoſe Ordinances, or any of them were ordained, as little Children ſeem to be in reference to the Lords Supper.

THus much briefly touching the nature of Catholick Communion: Come we now to enquire how, and by what means it may beſt be preſerved. There are two Bonds which the Scripture mentions, by which Chriſtians are bound and knit together in one Communion, the bond of *Charity*, and the bond of *Peace*.

1, The bond of Charity: *Above all theſe things put on Charity which is the bond of perfectneſs*, Col. 3.14. Charity is a bond which knits and unites mens

hearts together, and makes them *one in affection*, (*knit together in love*, as as it is expreſt *Col.* 2. 2.) and while they be ſo, it can hardly be but that they will be *one in Communion*. This was that which made the Catholick Church in its beginning to be *all of one heart and one ſoul*, as it is ſaid the multitude of them that believed were, *Acts* 4. 32. And that was the reaſon doubtleſs why they continued ſtedfaſtly in their Communion in the Apoſtles Doctrine and Fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread and prayer.

Charity we ſee is called the bond of perfectneſs: for the Church is in a kind of perfect ſtate in her Communion, ſo long as the Parts and Members of it are knit together in one Communion by *love*; *made perfect in one*, as our Saviour expreſſeth it, *Joh.* 17. 23. And the Union in Communion which is made by love, is Union in its perfection, nothing unites Chriſtians ſo entirely and firmly as love does. If Chriſtians love one another *in the truth*,

truth, and for the truth ſake which dwelleth in them, as St. *John* ſpeaks, this Love and Union by Love will laſt; there will be no failure in the oneneſs of Communion, until there be firſt a failure in love.

Charity muſt needs unite and knit Chriſtians together in one Communion, becauſe it is the Principle from which the particular acts of Chriſtian Fellowſhip, fore-mentioned, do ſpring: a great part of the acts of Chriſtian Communion, are nothing elſe but offices of brotherly love, and by theſe Chriſtians take faſt hold one of another. Charity in its own nature is communicative of the good it has, and the good it can do, and by that it does attract and draw others to a nearer conjunction with thoſe in whom it dwells. Charity is the *Arms* of the Chriſtians *inner* man by which they imbrace one another, though abſent.

Love is of a winning nature, it gains upon others that ſtand at a diſtance: If a Principle of love be in the heart,

it will season a mans speech, and enable him to *speak the truth in love*, according to St. *Pauls* direction. And the truth spoken in love will sooner reconcile, than the strongest Arguments when mixt with bitterness of Spirit. A tongue of love is *Solomons* tongue of health, it will heal wounds, when another tongue does but make them. And therefore with great reason did St. *Paul* call upon the Church of *Corinth* to do all their things with Charity, and spent a whole Chapter upon them to persuade them to it, as an effectual means to cure the divisions into which they were unhappily fallen.

Again, *Charity covereth a multitude of sins*, (1 Pet. 4. 8.) and by that means among other it keeps Christians from flying asunder, and dividing in their Communion, which many times takes its first rise from very small matters, when they meet with an evil mind that will aggravate and make the worst of things, and seek out matter to make the breach wider. But

Charity

Charity is not apt to ſpie faults, or to pick quarrels, nor to aggravate and make the worſt of things, nor to harbour jealouſies or evil ſurmiſes, out of which breaches are wont to grow: but it will over-look mens weakneſs, miſtakes, and inadvertencies, as believing they do not proceed from an evil mind. And if any thing be amiſs, love will take notice of all the extenuating circumſtances in the caſe much rather than thoſe which tend to aggravate a matter. *Charity thinketh not evil, is not eaſily provoked, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*; and by theſe means charitable men have hold of others, and keep them from flying out, unleſs of very bad minds and ill tempers.

The truth is, Charity is that to Catholick Communion, which the Soul is to the natural body, the life and ſpirit of it that preſerves it in a healthful condition; but ſo far as Charity is wanting in Communion, ſo far that Communion is ſickly

and languishing, and void of its true spirit and life.

2. The other Bond by which Christians are bound up together in one Catholick Communion, is the *bond of peace*, Ephes. 4. 3. *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* So that we see Peace is the bond by which the Unity of the Spirit is kept. Now this *Unity* of the Spirit is that oneness of mind and oneness of practice which holy men inspired by the Spirit have taught all Christians to observe, in reference to *Faith*, *Worship*, and *Love:* that is, that they should be all of one and the same Faith, use the same Worship, and have the same love to one another; which are the same things in which the Communion of the Catholick Church from the beginning of it did consist, as I have already shewed. When St. *Paul* beseecheth the Christians in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that they would *all speak the same thing, and that there might be no divisions among them, but that they would*

would be perfectly joyned together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment, he doth not ſay in reference to what, 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. But it is to be ſuppoſed that they readily underſtood his Exhortation to refer to theſe great Articles of Chriſtianity. The like we have in *Phil.* 2. 1, 2. ſave that love is there particularly inſtanced in: *If there be therefore any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

The Unity of the Spirit then is the Unity of Chriſtians in thoſe things in which they have Communion, or their Unity in Communion; and this is we ſee to be kept or preſerved by the bond of peace. Now this peace conſiſteth chiefly in Chriſtians avoiding differences among themſelves as much as in them lies. But if differences do ariſe, then this peace conſiſteth in ſuch gentleneſs, moderation, and calmneſs of behaviour in Chriſtians one towards another,

another, as by reason whereof their Christian Converse is not interrupted, nor their Communion disturbed, their differences notwithstanding. It is true indeed, in this imperfect state, it cannot be but that there will be difference of opinion among Christians about lesser things not essential to Communion, especially concerning such circumstantial matters as are left undetermined in Scripture, except only by general rule. For considering that more Christians are weake than those that are strong, and less spiritual both in point of knowledge, and in the graces of Humility, Meekness, and Charity, and more unmortified in self-will, and self-conceit, it cannot be otherwise but that there will be differences among Christians. But yet if the greater, the wiser and the better sort of Christians do not slight and despise those that differ from them through weakness of judgment, or prejudice of education, nor violently oppose them, but patiently bear with them, and wisely insinuate to them by degrees

degrees thoſe things which may help them, and by condeſcenſion become all things to them for their good ſo far as innocently they can, peace may very well be preſerved among them which otherwiſe differ in many things. Not but that offences will come when the beſt men have done the beſt they can to prevent it; for this will fall out ſo long as there are thoſe among Chriſtians whoſe Luſts and Paſſions are unmortified. But I am ſhewing how the Unity of the Spirit may be kept in the bond of peace among them that differ in mind and opinion about circumſtantial matters, and that they may converſe very lovingly together, where unmortified Luſts and Paſſions do not prevail, notwithſtanding ſuch difference. The wiſe and good carriage of good men towards thoſe that differ, will have a great influence upon them, if not preſently to reconcile them in opinion, yet to charm them into a peaceable demeanour, if they be not men of ill temper.

God

God himself makes allowances unto men that differ conscienciously about lesser things, and not out of affectation, though they err in judgment, so long as their error proceeds not from a corrupt will or pride of mind, *Rom.* 14. and good men so far as they are partakers of a divine nature, will do so too. And such differences are very consistent with Catholick Communion in peace and love. So that it is not so much mens differing in opinion about circumstantial matters in Religion that breaks Peace, destroys Charity, and disturbs the Communion of the Church, but mens unruly Lusts and Passions of pride, envy, and ill will, which take the advantage thence to vent themselves against one another in irregular practices. *From whence come wars and brawlings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* Jam. 4. 1.

Tho Christians then may differ in opinion in some lesser things, yet so long as they agree in the substance of Faith

Faith and Worſhip; and ſo long as they manage themſelves in their differences ſo as that peace is not broken by any irregular or troubleſome behaviour, their Communion in Faith, Worſhip, and Fellowſhip, or mutual love, cannot ſuffer much by ſuch differences. For Peace and Charity ſupport each other, and propagate each other. And the Apoſtle does very well therefore couple them together in his Exhortation, *Col.* 3. 14, 15. *Above all theſe things put on Charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which ye are called in one body.* The Peace here meant, to which Chriſtians are called by being united in one body, is peaceable living one with another.

3. Beſides the bond of Charity, and the bond of Peace, there is a third thing very neceſſary to the Unity and peaceable Communion in the Church, and that is *prudent and moderate Government.* The *peace* and *purity* of the Church are two great ends of the Govern-

Government in it, both which conduce very much to the comfortable Communion of the Church, and to the Christians Unanimity in it. In reference to which, *Moderation* is very necessary in respect of the external manner and circumstances of Worship; as namely, that the terms of Communion therein be made as easie as will well consist with publick edification and comely order. For when they are so, men will have no tolerable pretense upon account of conscience to refuse Communion with the Church therein. But otherwise some out of scruple of Conscience and others from a worse Principle, will be apt to take occasion to disturb the peace of the Church with disputes, and by deserting the Communion of it.

And then moderation and prudence are necessary to the same end in the exercise of Discipline in the Church, by making a difference in correcting open and notorious scandals, and lesser disorders. For else if both be punished

puniſhed alike when they are not alike criminal; or if leſſer diſorders ſhall be ſtrictly looked after, and ſeverely puniſhed, and greater connived at, it will tend to leſſen the Government in mens reverence and eſteem, and ſo weaken the ſenſe of the Churches peace, and render Communion with her leſs deſirable by ſuch as will take themſelves to be unequally dealt with by her.

But as good Government in the Church is neceſſary to its Peace, and to Unity in its Communion, ſo is obedience to ſuch Government, without which Government loſeth its end.

But when the Government and exerciſe of it is equal and as eaſie as will conſiſt with the due ends of it, then if yet for all that men will be troubleſom and diſobedient under it, they will be left without excuſe in the eyes of ſober men, if fitting courſe be taken to reſtrain them from diſturbing the peace of the Church; for otherwiſe if this be not granted, Government in the Church would ſignifie little.

Thus

THus much concerning our Inquiry touching the nature of Catholick Communion, and the means of preserving it. But before I proceed to an Inquiry into the nature of Schism, I think it not amiss to enquire for what reason the Unity of Catholick Communion is necessary, and why we should endeavour that as much as may be it should be kept entire, and all of a piece, and without Fracture. And the only reason which I shall insist on is this; because its being such, and so kept and maintained, tends greatly to the growth and increase of the Church both in respect of the number of its Members, and bigness of its Body, and also in respect of its healthful state, and its growing up to a greater stature in all virtue and goodness.

1. It tends to the increase of the body of Christians in the number of its Members. For next to the miraculous

culous operations of the Holy Ghoſt in the Apoſtles and Primitive Believers, the peaceable and charitable demeanour among Chriſtians, and good agreement among themſelves if it were generally found in them, would attract and draw men to the liking and love of the Religion which they profeſs, for the ſake of the lovely effects it produceth in them. Men can hardly think otherwiſe than well of that Religion by which they find men are made more peaceable and loving, and more ready to all good offices to one another, and to all men than others are, or than they themſelves were before they engaged heartily and ſeriouſly in it.

And that the concord and good agreement of all Chriſtians in one Catholick Communion has ſo happy a tendency, as I have ſaid, to draw others to the belief & love of that ſame Religion, appears by the reaſon why, and for which our bleſſed Saviour ſo earneſtly deſired and prayed for the Union and Agreement of all Chriſtians

in the things their Religien taught them, to wit, becauſe the world would thereby be brought to believe that he the Author of it, had been ſent of God, *Joh.* 17. 20,21. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me.* And its moſt apparent that the contrary to this has had its contrary effect. For where have any ſuch numerous additions to the Catholick Church been found from among the Pagan world, ſince the great diviſions which have riſen and been kept on foot in the Chriſtian world, as thoſe which were made for ſome hundreds of years together in the Primitive times while Catholick Communion was preſerved in the Church without any conſiderable interruption? Nay, have not the unreaſonable diviſions and fierce contentions which have broken out in the Reformed Churches ſince the Reformation,

mation, and in our own nation eſpecially, been a temptation to many to turn Atheiſts or Scepticks?

The holy Scriptures in many places ſeem to foretel a more general flowing of the Nations of the world into the Church, than ever yet has been accompliſhed: But we cannot reaſonably expect this ſhould be brought to paſs by means of the Chriſtian Churches in being, until by humility, peaceableneſs, and charity, and good agreement among themſelves, and other virtues, they make a better repreſentation of the excellency of the Religion which they profeſs, than they do at this day. When God Almighty *turns to the people a pure Language*, then it may be expected they will *call upon him, and ſerve him with one conſent*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Zeph.* 3. 9, Not while they treat one another with *impure* and corrupt Language which ſmels of wrath and diſdain, of envy, ſpight, and contempt; Not while by words they do all they can to diſgrace one another, but by *ſpeaking*

the truth in love, and with *meekness of wisdom.*

2. The good agreement of Christians in one Catholick Communion, tends greatly to the increase of the Church in respect of its spiritual healthful state, and its growing up to a greater stature in all virtue and goodness. For where peace and good agreement is in the several offices of Christian Brotherhood, there love is, which is the bond of perfectness which holds them fast together. And love is a *radical* grace, out of which other graces grow, in so much that love is made the Summary of all Christian duties towards one another: *Love* is said to *be the fulfilling of the Law*, Rom. 13. 8.10. *Charity edifieth*, saith St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 8.1. It tends to edifie and build up the subject in which it dwels, and to make him more like God who is love; and it tends to edifie the object on which it is set, and on which it exerciseth it self; it tends to build up both the one and the other in grace and goodness.

And

And there is this further reaſon why a peaceable agreement in one Catholick Communion tends to increaſe the Church in her ſpiritual riches, *viz.* becauſe the holy Spirit of God delights to dwell where peace and love dwell, and there to diſpence and communicate his treaſures by which the ſouls of men are enriched; but without his ſupplies, influences, and operations, there is no thriving in grace and real goodneſs. *He that dwels in love, God dwels in him,* 1 Joh. 4.16. And where God takes up his ſpecial reſidence, he will adorn thoſe living Temples with plenty of ſpiritual ornaments, and thoſe ſhall be ſure to be made partakers of his beſt ſort of gifts, ſuch as the world cannot receive. *Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace ſhall be with you,* ſaith St. *Paul,* 2 Cor. 13. 11. While the Catholick Church is of one mind in the great things of Chriſtian Religion, and being ſo, do live in peace, and not unpeaceably contend, fall out and divide about leſſer things,

such as for which God perhaps doth neither esteem or disesteem men, he who is the God of love and peace will be with them to bless them with his presence, with spiritual blessings especially. And as the presence of the soul in the body enlivens it with natural life, by virtue whereof the several Members perform their several functions proper to each of them respectively, even so the presence of the holy Spirit in the body of Christ the Church does animate it with spiritual life, and does so influence and actuate the several Members of it, as that by virtue thereof they all perform their several Christian offices proper to each for the common good of the whole.

But then this vital power of acting spiritually, is conveyed by the Spirit to each of the Members *as they are in Union* and *communion with the whole*, and so as one Member is made a Channel of this conveyance to another, and each enabled to contribute its part to the common good of the whole.

whole. Thus *Col.*2.19. where St.*Paul*, mentioning the Head of the Church, ſaith, *from which all the body by joynts and bonds having nouriſhment miniſtred and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.* This ſpiritual nouriſhment of the body, flows from Chriſt the Head we ſee, as having obtained it by his Mediation; but then it is the great Office-work of the holy Spirit to apply the benefits obtained by Chriſt, to the ſeveral members of his body by working and increaſing grace and comfort in them. *He ſhall glorifie me, for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhew it unto you,* ſaith our Saviour, ſpeaking of the Holy Ghoſt, *Joh.*16.14. And this conveyance of nouriſhment from the Head to the Members by the Holy Spirit, is made by the union of the parts as knit together by joynts and bands, by which Union one member is made a Channel of conveyance of nouriſhment to another: and in this way the whole body increaſeth with the increaſe of God. This being ſo, a diſunion of the parts

or members must needs obstruct this spiritual nourishment, and hinder the growth of the body. To the same effect is that parallel place, *Ephes.* 4. 15, 16. *Speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectual working of the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love.* This increase of the body to the edifying it self in love, is made we see both by the parts of the body being joyned together, and also by that which every joynt supplyeth being so compacted.

Thus we see how the increase of the Church in spiritual strength depends upon Gods special presence and assistance, and how the enjoyment of that presence depends upon the peaceable agreement and mutual love of the parts of which the Church doth consist. And if so, then unpeaceableness, discord and strife, contention

tention and dividing into Parties in the Church, muſt neceſſarily tend to deprive her of that ſpecial preſence and divine aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit, without which Chriſtians cannot thrive and increaſe in true goodneſs, and for want of which they will rather decline and go backward. Tho the God of peace and of love will be with his People while they are ſo of one mind in the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity, as upon that account to live in peace and Chriſtian Communion one with another, notwithſtanding their differing in ſome leſſer things, which will always be found in the beſt eſtate of the Church which can be expected here on earth; yet there is no reaſon to expect he will be ſo with them when they do not ſo live in peace, tho they ſhould otherwiſe be of one mind in the fundamental Doctrines of Chriſtianity, and all the ſubſtantial parts of Worſhip.

The holy Spirit may indeed diſpenſe gifts of Knowledge, and Utterance, and the like, which are common

common to bad men as well as good; ſuch as theſe he may beſtow upon Chriſtians even while they are in diſorder and unpeaceable diviſion: But as for thoſe *fruits of the Spirit* which conſtitute men truly good, ſuch as *love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, and meekneſs,* (Gal. 5. 22.) the having of theſe and mens being of an unpeaceable temper, and in a ſtate of diſcord and diviſion, are I fear inconſiſtent; for theſe are contrary one to another. Tho St. *Paul* acknowledged thoſe of the Church of *Corinth* to be *enriched with all utterance and all knowledge,* Chap. 1, 5. yet in *Chap.* 3. 1. he tells them that he *could not ſpeak unto them as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal, even as to babes in Chriſt*; and for this reaſon, as it follows in *ver.* 3. becauſe there *was among them envying, ſtrife, and diviſion. Ye are yet carnal,* ſaith he, *for whereas there is among you envying, and ſtrife, and diviſions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men*; that is, as other men which were no Chriſtians. They might

might indeed know and believe, and talk otherwiſe and better than thoſe that were out of the Church, but their walking and living was but as theirs, while envying, ſtrife, and diviſion was found with them. For theſe are of thoſe *works of the fleſh* of which St. *Paul* ſaith, *that thoſe which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, Gal. 5. 20, 21.

And if Chriſtians would but examine and judge of themſelves by theſe Scripture meaſures, it would make them on all hands, one ſide as well as another, to be as much afraid to do any thing to diſturb the peace of the Church, or to be guilty of envying, ſtrife, and diviſion in it, as they would be to find themſelves but in a carnal ſtate, and of being ſhut out of the Kingdom of heaven.

And as for thoſe who are guilty of theſe things in theſe ſad times, wherein envying ſtrife and diviſion do abound, it is hugely neceſſary that as they love their own ſouls, they would without delay repent, and get out of ſuch

such a state, and not flatter and deceive themselves with an opinion of their good and safe condition upon account of their being otherwise Orthodox and Religious, so long as they indulge themselves in such a state.

QUERY XIV.

WHat is the nature of Schism?

From what hath been discoursed touching the nature of Catholick Communion, and the means of preserving it, we may be able to make a judgment of the nature of *Schism*, what it is, and who are guilty of it. For if Catholick Communion stands in the Unity of the Spirit, or Christians Unity in their Communion in the Doctrine of Faith in things necessary to Salvation, and in the substance of Worship; and in their fellowship or mutual love, as I have shew'd it does;

does; then their being *divided* in theſe, or any one of theſe, or in any leſſer things, if the *Unity* of their Communion be thereby deſtroyed, that undoubtedly is *Schiſm.* When any thing which before was but one, comes to be divided, it ceaſeth to be one any longer, unleſs there be a re-union; and thus it is in reference to Church Communion.

Altho Chriſtians do agree in the Chriſtian Faith, and in the ſubſtance of Worſhip alſo, yet if upon account of any leſſer things they be ſo divided as that Chriſtian Fellowſhip or Brotherly love be thereby deſtroyed, their *Unity* of Communion is thereby deſtroyed alſo. I do not ſay that all their Communion in thoſe things wherein they are agreed is deſtroyed by uncharitable diviſion, but this I ſay that the *Unity* of their Communion is thereby deſtroyed. For Brotherly love is an eſſential part of Catholick Communion, ſo that if that be deſtroyed by any diviſion, tho but about leſſer matters, the *Unity* of the Communion

is

is destroyed, and the guilt of Schism contracted, yea, and their Communion it self in Faith and Worship, wherein they are agreed, is greatly damnified also.

For their Communion in Faith and Worship is rendred unacceptable to God, and unprofitable to themselves for want of Communion in Brotherly love: *though I had all Faith and have not Charity, I am nothing.* And for Worship: *If thou bringest thy gift to the Altar, and remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*; Shewing how little God regardeth devotional Communion in Worship when void of true Charity.

The *Schism* we enquire after then, lies in *division in the Church,* as that is opposite to, and destructive of Christian *Unity* in *Faith,* or in *Worship,* or in *Love,* And all Church division tends more or less to the destruction of Christian Unity in these

in

in whole or in part. That it lies in *diviſion*, appears in that it receives its name from that; for the word *Schiſm* ſignifies *diviſion* or a rent. And the Tranſlators of our Engliſh Bible, when they have put the word *diviſion* in the line reading, they have put *Schiſm* in the Margin, 1 *Cor*, 10. 10. and 11.18. and when *Schiſm* in the line, *diviſion* in the Margin, 1 *Cor*. 12.25. and this they have done to explain the one by the other.

Since then Schiſm conſiſts in Church diviſion, it follows, that by how much the greater the diviſion is at any time, by ſo much the greater is the Schiſm; and the leſs the one is, the leſs is the other alſo. We muſt therefore diſtinguiſh of Schiſm. There are ſeveral ſorts or degrees of Diviſion, and ſo of Schiſm, which are ſometimes found among Chriſtians.

I. A *different perſuaſion* in Chriſtians touching ſome things *indifferent* in their own nature, ſome holding them unlawful, others lawful, ſome accounting them neceſſary, when others

others are otherwise perſuaded. This difference fell out between the believing Jews and the believing Gentiles touching ſome meats, the obſervation of days, and the uſe of Circumciſion. And a difference much like to this, in ſome reſpects, has fallen out among ſome Chriſtians in our days, and in our Nation. Now a *difference* of this nature, tho it be in ſome ſort a *diviſion*, yet it is capable of being ſo managed, as that the effects of ſinful Schiſm ſhall ſcarcely at all follow upon it. As thus;

Firſt, if thoſe who are ſcrupulous, and yet under a miſtake, ſhall be modeſt and humble in their diſſenting, and deſirous to be as little troubleſom and offenſive to their Brethren from whom they differ as poſſibly they can, and as tender of diſturbing the peace of the Church as their caſe will permit, and ready to hear and impartially to conſider any thing offered by their brethren to remove their ſcruples, and reconcile them in judgment.

Secondly,

Secondly, if they be not averſe to comply with their Brethren in all things *ſo far as they can*, and to hold Communion with them ſo far as they have *attained* and are agreed, according to the Apoſtles Exhortation in that caſe, when he ſays, *Nevertheleſs whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing*, Phil. 3. 16. For theſe words were uſed in reference to thoſe Chriſtians mentioned in the Verſe before, of whom he had ſaid, *If in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you.* And indeed this compliance is neceſſary in all like caſes to prevent Schiſm, upon a double account.

1. Otherwiſe, ſuch *do not what they can* to preſerve Peace, and prevent Schiſm, and ſo muſt be guilty of it if it follow for want of ſuch compliance. That to do thus is their undoubted duty, is clear from that of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 12. 18. *If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*; how much more with fellow

Christians. If Christian compliance then be the way to live peaceably with Christian Brethren, then it follows, that if they do not comply *as much as in them lies*, and as far as they can when the preserving of peace requires it, they do not what they ought to do, and if Schism or a breach of peace follows, they must needs be accessary to it, and guilty of it.

2. Because if they do not comply so far as they can, , they give occasion of suspicion that their non-compliance in that wherein their differing from their Brethren professedly lies, proceeds not so much from scruple of conscience as from some worse Principle, such as, humour self will, a spirit of opposition and contradiction, or a personal prejudice against the men from whom they differ, or the like. For it will be thought that if Conscience to God were the only reason why they differ with their Brethren in any thing; that then Conscience would engage them to go along with their Brethren

Brethren in that wherein they do not differ, and to be tender and ſcrupulous of making the difference or breach between them wider than needs muſt, and of multiplying occaſion of offence cauſeleſly. Men cannot be confident when they ſee ſuch men are not tender of Conſcience in the one, that they are ſo in the other, but will be apt to ſuſpect that their differing proceeds chiefly from ſome worſe cauſe, tho the parties themſelves perhaps are not aware of it, but think it proceeds from the goodneſs of their Conſcience, when there is no ſuch matter. And when this occaſion of ſuſpicion is given by not complying in what they can, the natural effect of it will be to weaken mens eſteem of them, and affection to them, and to prepare the way to farther difference. Whereas a compliance, as far as poſſibly they can, would maintain a good opinion of them in mens minds, procure them fair quarter from them that differ from them, prevent the differenee from growing up into a

direct Schism, and prepare the way to reconciliation.

For when it does indeed appear by complying as far as they can, and by other truly Christian behaviour of persons that through error of judgment differ from their Brethren in other things, that that difference proceeds purely from Conscience tho erronious, and not from a worse Principle, their case is truly *pitiable*, and calls for tenderness towards them from them that differ from them; and to treat them accordingly, is certainly the way to gain upon them, and to make them the more capable of receiving information and satisfaction in their scruples. Whereas when they are otherwise treated with severity, it tends to spoil their good temper, and to exasperate them, and to make them out of disgust to them who have so dealt with them, to unite into Parties, and make head against them, to the imbroiling the Church in grievous Schism.

2. There

2. There is another and worſe Diviſion or Schiſm than meer difference in judgment and practice in ſome leſſer things, and that diviſion lies more in Chriſtians unchriſtian managing their differences than in the difference that is in their opinion and practice when it is but about ſome things wherein the good or hurt of men would be little concerned, if they could be ſeparated from their effects. And this diviſion lies in the *immoderate* manner of contending for that wherein Chriſtians differ. As thus; when they do not content themſelves with offering their arguments fairly and peaceably for that wherein they differ, but fall out with their Brethren for not ſubmitting to, but oppoſing them both in their arguments and practice, as when they ſet them at naught, and cenſure them as inſincere, as not truly lovers of truth, but that they are byaſſed by ſome undue intereſt, of honour, reputation, or gain, or humour, or ſelf-will, and that theſe prevail with them more than

truth. Now such things as these, are of a provoking nature, and lay a temptation upon their Brethrens Passions. and tend directly to alienate affections, and minister to unpeaceable contendings, and are a direct breach of peace. Tho men have truth on their side, yet they may be Schismatical in labouring to propagate, or to defend that truth, when they go farther in doing so than *speaking the truth in love*, I mean in way of Controversie. Tho those that differ from them may possibly be moved with undue motives to oppose them, and the reasons for what they hold; yet because whether they be so or no, is a matter of which they are not competent Judges, it lying out of their reach, and belonging only to the Judgment of God, who only is the searcher of hearts, therefore whatever they may fear or suspect, yet they should forbear either to pronounce or insinuate any such hard things against their Brethren, by which they *become Judges of evil thoughts.*

thoughts. Which if they do not, they ſtir up ſtrife, and violate peace by cauſing unquietneſs and diſorder in the Church, and deſtroy Charity, weaken, yea, wound the very Spirit of the Churches Communion, which without doubt is Schiſm, tho it ſhould never proceed to actual ſeparation.

This mingling of mens Paſſions and unchriſtian Cenſures and inſinuations with their Arguments, hinders the due operation of their Arguments upon their Antagoniſts minds, tho they ſhould have truth on their ſide; *For the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God,* but hinders it, *Jam.* 1.20. Whereas tho men do differ, yet ſo long as they propoſe and reply one to another no otherwiſe than as ſuppoſing both ſides to be only in the ſearch of truth, they may live lovingly and peaceably together, and enjoy Edifying and comfortable Communion one with onother, their difference in Judgment notwithſtanding.

3. There is a division, and consequently a Schism in the Church of a higher nature than the former, and that is when the persons that divide, or cause division in the Church, unnecessarily gather into a *Party*, and do after a sort unite and combine themselves together, the more publickly and avowedly to maintain and carry on the Cause they have espoused in opposition to their Brethren, and industriously labour to increase their number as hoping thereby in time to be able to bring their opposites to submit to them, and to give up their Cause. Now if the thing or things they after this manner contend for, should be unprofitable for the Church in case they should obtain, or of so little use or benefit, as that it could never reasonably be expected that it should countervail the hurt that is or will be done to the Church, to the Communion of the Church, to the Cause of Religion in the world, and to the Souls of men in general, by being obtained in such a way, it would be

be a moſt grievous Schiſm thus to divide and imbroil the Church upon ſo mean an account.

A Diviſion or Schiſm of this nature is termed *Faction*, which is a ſiding or making of Parties in the Church. And of this nature in ſome ſort was the Schiſm in the Church of *Corinth*: For their Diviſions were factious Diviſions,, for they proceeded to making of Parties. Their Crime in this, charged upon them by St. *Paul*, is termed *Diviſions* in our Bibles, but the word is *Faction* in the Margin, 1 *Cor.* 3.3. And part of the works of the fleſh rendred *Seditions* in our Tranſlation, is *Diviſions* or *Factions* in the Margin, *Gal.* 5.20. This ſort of Diviſion which is accompanied with Faction, or making of Parties, is more than is found in ſome Diviſions which yet are ſinful.

Now when a Schiſm grows up to this height, to a combined ſtrength, it is much worſe than while it was acted only by a few apart, and in a more private way, and leſs taken notice

notice of; because then there is more of contempt in it, and more are corrupted by it, and the peace of the Community more disturbed; and because usually by endeavours of increasing the Party, much more evil is perpetrated by slanders, naughty insinuations and suggestions against those they divide from, and combine against, than was found in the nature of the division at first, or in the nature of the error on which the division first began.

This factious division is likewise aggravated further when it partakes of the nature of *Sedition:* And we see in the fore-cited place, (*Gal.*5.)the same word signifies *Division, Faction,* and *Sedition.* Now *Sedition,* I conceive, is a division accompanied with a combination of men against the *Government* either of Church or State under which the Providence of God hath set them: It is their acting things contrary to that Government, farther than the necessity of not sinning against God does oblige them, to the disturbing of

of the publick peace thereby: or it may be ſo perhaps by ſeeking to alter any thing amiſs or inconvenient in the Government, in an undue way; that is, by acting out of their ſphere, or the place or rank in which the providence of God hath ſet them; their going beyond their bounds in it, or their doing more to accompliſh it, than the Law or Government under which they are, allows them. For otherwiſe it is not ſeditious (I conceive) for men to endeavour to get any thing amiſs in the Government to be altered in a regular way; that is, in ſuch a way as the Government or publick Conſtitution allows.

I need not ſay how much the two bonds, the one of Peace, the other of Charity, is broken by this ſort of Diviſion which is accompanied either with Faction or Sedition, nor how great the Schiſm is that is made thereby: But this is certain that a Diviſion of this kind cannot be without much *envying and ſtrife*; and where theſe are, *there is confuſion, and every evil*

evil work, as St. *James* hath told us, *Chap.*3.16.

4. Another sort of division in the Church, is that which is made by an *unjust Separation* of one part of the Catholick Church from another in the business of their Communion in their solemn Worship: And this is a division of a very high nature indeed, especially when it is accompanied with the third sort of Division before insisted on. For if such a Division be unjustly made, it is point blank contrary to the Unity of the Spirit; that is, contrary to the Unity of Communion among Christians which was taught and practised by men inspired by the Spirit, in reference both to solemn Worship, and Christian Fellowship, as has been formerly explained. By such a Division the Churches peace is broken with a high hand, great offence being thereby taken at others, and cause of offence given to them, and a wide gap opened for debate, strife, contention, and confusion to enter in, to a dreadful destruction of Charity, the

the ſpirit and life of Chriſtianity, without which Faith it ſelf is dead, and all other religious performances little available.

It concerns us greatly therefore, and ſome men more eſpecially, very diligently to inquire, how far the Diviſions and Separations that do abound in our days, and in this Nation, are unjuſtly or juſtly made. To do which I do not know a more compendious way than to enquire into the nature of our National Conſtitution about Gods publick Worſhip, and the power of giving being to it, and how far we are obliged to obſerve it.

That ſuch National Conſtitutions as have been made in ſeveral Nations for reformation from Popery, and for the eſtabliſhing of the Reformed Religion and Worſhip in the room of it, ſince the beginning of the Reformation, has been ſo far approved of by God, as that he does reckon and eſteem thoſe Nations his Kingdoms upon that account, I have found, as I conceive, in our twelfth Inquiry.

Which

Which with what else is there produced and argued for the usefulness of such National Constitutions, I take to be ground sufficient to authorize a National authority in such an undertaking.

Now when ever the forming of such National Constitution is undertaken by them to whom it does belong, they must needs find, that tho the Essentials and substance of all divine Worship is expressly and particularly set down in Scripture, yet there are several Circumstances and Accidents of Worship which pertain to the external administration of the substance, which are not otherwise determined in Scripture than by general Rules; as that *Edification, Order, and Decency* be always observed in the choice of such things as are not particularly determined and set down in Scripture. Such are those I instanced in in another of our Inquiries concerning Prayer: tho all the substantial parts of it are determined in Scripture, yet we are no where limited to pray with

with a ſet Form, nor without one, to uſe or not to uſe Book-prayer, to kneel or to ſtand in Praying, nor directed whether in the Publick Worſhip there ſhall be ſeveral diſtinct and ſhort Prayers uſed for ſeveral things, or whether all Prayer, matter fit for a publick Aſſembly, ſhall be compriſed in one or more longer Prayers. And the like may be ſaid touching ſeveral external Circumſtances that are to be uſed in all other parts of Publick Worſhip.

This being the caſe, it will neceſſarily fall under the conſideration of thoſe who are imployed in the forming a publick Conſtitution for Worſhip, which of theſe will tend moſt to the Peace, Unity, and Edification of the Church, and to Decency and Order; whether to leave all undetermined Circumſtances of Worſhip to every ones choice, who are to adminiſter the holy things, or in theſe things to chuſe for them, and to determine by an Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution what ſhall be obſerved.

Suppoſe

Suppose we then that upon serious consideration and consultation they come to be fully perswaded in their own minds, that to leave all, both Ministers and People, to their own choice in such undetermined Circumstances in Gods Publick Worship, would tend to great Division, Disorder, and Confusion, as it did in the late times of general Liberty, and that then we should have one opposing another in their different ways, and making of Parties one against another, to endless branglements, and to the eating out the heart and life of true Religion: And suppose also that upon such considerations as these they come to a resolution to determine all undetermined Circumstances of Publick Worship by the use of a Liturgy, except only what is to be performed in the Pulpit, as that which tends most in their Judgment, to Peace, Unity, Edification, Order, and Decency.

And when they have gone thus far in general, they will necessarily be led to proceed in the next place to the

the choice of particular Circumſtances of adminiſtration of the ſeveral parts of Publick Worſhip. In which it is to be preſumed they govern themſelves according to the beſt of their underſtanding by thoſe general Rules which direct all things to be done for Edification, Order, and Decency.

And when they have done ſo, and brought things to the beſt iſſue they could, yet conſidering that all men, and the beſt of men are fallible, it is not unlikely but that they may be miſtaken in ſome things, and that ſuch and ſuch a Circumſtance or Mode of adminiſtration of Worſhip would have better and more fully agreed with the general Rules, than thoſe they have made choice of. But yet if their failings and and miſtakes therein do not extend to the corrupting of Gods Worſhip in the Eſſence or ſubſtance of it, but only to the ordering of ſome *leſs uſeful* Circumſtances to be obſerved in the external manner of performance of that Worſhip, there will be no juſt cauſe of ſeparating from

Communion in it upon that account.

For those who *separate* from Communion in the Worship which is every Lords day performed in our Parochial Assemblies according to our Liturgy, are obliged to prove one of these two things against it, if they would justifie their separation from it. Either first, that the Worship is *corrupt in the Essence* or substance of it; or secondly, that the faults or defects in the *External manner* of performance of it are such as do fall short of, and *defeat the end* for which an external way and manner of performing Publick Worship should serve and is appointed.

If they would prove such Worship corrupt in the Essence or substance of it, they must prove that it is so either in the object of Worship, or in the subject matter of it, for in those two the Essence or substance of Worship doth consist. To prove it corrupt in reference to the object of Worship, they must prove that the Worship is directed

rected to ſome Creature as well as to the only true God, or by ſome Mediator other than Chriſt Jeſus. But this they will not pretend to do.

If they would prove it corrupt in reſpect of the ſubject matter of it, they muſt prove that the Prayers which are made, or the matters for which Praiſe is given to Almighty God, are not Prayer matter, or Thankſgiving matter, or that ſome other part of Worſhip is uſed as of Divine Inſtitution which is not ſuch. But now none of theſe things can be proved againſt the Liturgy. For no other things are therein prayed for, or thanks given to God for, but ſuch as the *Diſſenters* themſelves do, may or ought to pray for or praiſe God for, nor any thing elſe obſerved as an Ordinance of God, but what they themſelves do own to be of Divine Inſtitution, ſuch as Baptiſm and the Lords Supper. So that the whole of the Worſhip *is pure and uncorrupt* in reſpect of the *Eſſence* of it.

2. If then they will prove any thing to purpose, they must prove that the faults and defects in the external manner of performing the said Worship, are such as cause it to fall short of, and do defeat the end and use for which an external administration of Publick Worship serves and is appointed.

Now the end and use of the best external Mode of Worship, is *edification*; that is, it serves to convey the object and subject matter of Worship to the mind of the Worshippers, to the end they may be suitably affected.

And this end of Worship is defeated when the Worship is performed in a Language which the People do not understand, or in such words and phrases as are insignificant of, or unsuitable to the parts of Worship to which they are applied. But neither of these things can be charged upon the Worship performed according to the Liturgy. For the Worship is performed in a Language understood by all

all the People, and in words and phraſes competently ſignificant and expreſſive of, and ſutable to the nature of the ſubject matter of the Worſhip in its ſeveral parts, and ſo is agreeable to the general Rule for adminiſtration of Publick Worſhip, which the Apoſtle terms to be *uttering by the tongue, words eaſie to be underſtood*, 1 *Cor.* 14. By it the minds of men may be guided and conducted from one part of Worſhip to another, and be affected according to the different nature of the ſeveral parts of which the whole Worſhip doth conſiſt; which is the proper end and uſe of an external Form of adminiſtration of Publick Worſhip.

Object. But perhaps it will be ſaid, that the Worſhip performed according to the Liturgy does not ſo adequately and fully agree with the rule and end of the external adminiſtration of Worſhip in ſome reſpects, as it might have been made to do, or as ſome other does.

To which I answer, That the question is not whether the external manner of Worship according to the Liturgy be the best or no in all respects: But suppose it should not, and suppose that some external Circumstances ordered by it should be, or make it to be less useful than it might have been, or than some others are; yet so long as they do but make it *less useful* to the *end* for which it serves, but do not *defeat it*, nor are destructive of it, nor of the Worship it self, but that it remains competently useful to its proper end, tho comparatively but in an inferiour degree. Suppose, I say, that all this should be granted for Argument sake, and we should proceed with them upon their own terms, yet this would be no sufficient cause of refusing Communion with the Church in the Ordinances of God thus administred.

1. For first, if it were, it could scarcely be lawful to hold Communion with any particular Church in the whole world: because it is not likely but

but that more or leſs of ſuch Circumſtances of Worſhip as are leſs uſeful, are uſed in all Churches in the World. For conſidering the fallibility of all men, and their knowing but in part at beſt, I think it would be no breach of Charity to ſuppoſe, that there is no Church Conſtitution for Worſhip in all the world, nor perhaps any one way of external adminiſtration of holy things humanely performed, but what is accompanied with Circumſtantial defects more or leſs, ſuch, I mean, as are leſs uſeful than others that might be made uſe of, were it not for mens imperfection that have the making or managing of them. So that the Notion or Opinion that Circumſtantial defects in the external manner of Worſhip is a juſt ground of ſeparation from it, is deſtructive of Catholick Communion it ſelf.

2. None account themſelves guilty of or defiled by the defects that are in the manner of a Miniſters praying in the Pulpit, ſo long as the

matter is good: and there is the same reason in reference to Circumstantial defects in Prayers made by the Liturgy. We can hardly say that any publick Prayer is so free from all defects, but either in respect of the Method, or manner of expressing the matter, it might possibly be better done than usually it is done even by good men. And therefore it is a very unreasonable thing to make Circumstantial defects in the manner of praying, a ground of separation from Communion in Prayer.

3. If it were lawful to separate from Communion in Worship, only because less usefully administred; then tho there should be no Liturgy in the case, yet where one Minister does but excel another in his Ministration, it would be lawful to separate from that Congregation where the Worship or other Ministration is less usefully performed, and in a manner inferiour to what is done by another in another place. But no man will be so absurd as to say this may be practised,

for

for if it might, there would be no end of ſeparation, but a door would be opened to all confuſion, and People muſt be ſeparating as often as they conceive they have found one Miniſter of a Congregation to excel another in the manner of his Miniſtration. And if Separation may not be practiſed upon this account, then it cannot be duly practiſed for that reaſon that the manner of Worſhip performed according to the Liturgy, is leſs uſeful and leſs edifying than that which is or may be done after another manner.

4, It is not the *external manner* of Worſhip, but the *eſſential matter* that is the *Rule* of Chriſtians agreement in one Catholick Communion in Worſhip throughout the world. In the one they are ſtrictly bound up by particular determination; in the other they are left more at large to govern themſelves to the beſt of their underſtanding by general Rules. And the different Circumſtances under which Chriſtians are in ſeveral Nations, will neceſſitate them to

to uſe ſome difference in practice even while they govern themſelves by the ſame general Rules. *Do all things to edifying; Let the peace of God rule in your hearts to which ye are called in one body,* are two general Rules; and Chriſtians are to have reſpect to the one as well as the other in ordering their practice: The ſame Circumſtances of Worſhip will not tend both to edification and to peace alſo, at one time and in one place, which will do ſo at another. Theſe Rules touching Edification and Peace would lead a man to do otherwiſe in his Communion in Publick Worſhip with the Churches in *France*, in *Geneva*, in *Holland*, if he ſhould ſojourn in theſe places, than he does while he is here in *England*, and obſerves the uſages of this National Church: For it would not tend to peace and edification for ſuch an one to make a diſturbance by labouring to ſet on foot among them all the ſame Circumſtances of Worſhip he had been accuſtomed to here becauſe he likes them better. And the ſame is true

of

of ſuch as come from thoſe forein Churches to ſojourn here, or in any other Reformed Church. The right way of maintaining true Catholick Communion, is to refuſe Communion with no Church in any Country that is Orthodox in the Faith, and in the Eſſence of Worſhip, and is not Schiſmatical, notwithſtanding any difference there may be in the degrees of uſefulneſs in the external manner of Worſhip, between one Church and another, ſo long as they are all uſeful to their end in ſome good meaſure, and agreeable to general Rules in that caſe. I cannot take him for a right Catholick Chriſtian that can have no Communion with any Church where he comes but where the external Mode of Worſhip agrees with that which he moſt affects. *When I am at* Rome *I faſt on Saturdays, when I am here* (*at Milan*) *I do not*, ſaid St. *Ambroſe* to St. *Auſtin.*

5. One external Mode of Worſhip is not therefore uſeleſs becauſe another is more uſeful: For a greater degree of

of usefulness herein does not exclude a less, but only excel it. The gesture of Kneeling in Prayer is better and more suitable to the nature of the duty than that of standing; yet that does not make it unlawful to pray standing; One Version of the Psalms is more useful to its end than another; yet that does not make it unlawful to joyn with those who use that which is less useful. Nay, I will say more than this; That Mode of Worship which is best under some Circumstances, is not so under others: As when it cannot be used without causing such a division in the Church as will produce most pernicious effects in reference to the Church it self, and to Religion. Upon which account the Dissenters ought to esteem it better to joyn in the Worship performed by the Liturgy, than in that performed in their Assemblies under the ill Circumstances which do attend it, tho they esteem theirs to be better abstractedly considered.

6. If

6. If a leſs degree of uſefulneſs in the external manner of Worſhip ſhould be allowed to be a ſufficient ground of Separation from Communion in it where it is uſed, our Church diviſions would be irrepairable and beyond all remedy in whoſe hands ſoever the ordering the external Circumſtances and manner of Worſhip may fall, be they the *Diſſenters* themſelves, or any other. For when they ſhall have done the beſt they can therein, there will be others who will find out ſome Circumſtantial defects in it that will in their judgment (and perhaps according to truth too) render it leſs uſeful than it was capable of being made. There is ſuch a difference in the thoughts and apprehenſions of wiſe and good men themſelves, and much more in thoſe that are weaker, that it is impoſſible unleſs they were all divinely inſpired, that they ſhould all agree to a Circumſtance in ſuch a thing as the external manner of Worſhip, but that ſome will think this, and others will think that might have been better done than it is. There

There is a neceſſity therefore, unleſs we reſolve to perpetuate diviſion and ſeparation, to take up with the beſt external way and manner of Publick Worſhip we can obtain from the wiſdom of the Nation, ſo long as it is competently uſeful to its end, and not to divide and ſeparate upon account of our eſteeming it leſs uſeful than we deſire. For otherwiſe it is not to be expected that the beſt wiſdom that is to be found in the Nation ſhould ever be able to find out any way or means of curing our Church diviſions, and to put an end to our unchriſtian-like ſeparations? And to give liberty for every one to do that which he eſteemeth beſt, is fartheſt of all from working ſuch a Rule.

Object. But it may be it will be ſaid, and indeed is alledged by ſome, That ſince every man is to worſhip and ſerve God in the beſt manner he can, it follows, that therefore if there be one way of Publick Worſhip, which he eſteems better than another, he is to make uſe of that when he has oppor-

opportunity of doing ſo. And by this thoſe that do eſteem the external manner of Worſhip uſed in ſeparate Aſſemblies to be better than that performed by the Liturgy in Parochial Congregations, do labour to defend their ſeparation.

To this ſeveral things are to be ſaid.

1. In ordering the Mode or manner of Publick Worſhip, reſpect is to be had, not to what is moſt acceptable to one ſort of men only, but to what is uſeful and profitable for the whole Community, as well thoſe who are of a lower capacity as thoſe of a higher, as well thoſe who deſire a Liturgy, as thoſe that do not, and to what is moſt likely to preſerve peace among them. And when the Government to this end hath ordered that part of the Publick Worſhip ſhall be performed by the Liturgy, and has allowed a liberty of performing part of it without by Pulpit Prayer; proviſion is thereby made to accommodate both the one and the other in the

the external manner of Worſhip. And Chriſtian ingenuity and *Charity which ſeeketh not her own,* will teach men to be content that others ſhould be accommodated as well as themſelves in things wherein they may, rather than to make a diviſion in the Church becauſe all things are not ordered juſt as they would have them. And of this truly Chriſtian ſtrain was St. *Paul,* which made him ſay, *I pleaſe all men in all things, not ſeeking mine own profit, but the profit of many that they may be ſaved,* 1 Cor. 10.33. And that it has been the judgment of the Church from Age to Age, that it is beſt for the Church, all things conſidered, that the Publick Worſhip, at leaſt in part, ſhould be performed by a Liturgy, appears by their having ordered that ſo it ſhould be. And this ought to weigh much with humble and modeſt men, remembring what St. *Paul* hath ſaid in another caſe to ſhew what eſteem ought to be had of the Uſages and Cuſtoms of the Churches of God: *If any man ſeem contentious, we have no ſuch*

Such Cuſtom, neither the Churches of God, 1 Cor. 11. 16.

2. To ſatisfie, yea, to convince ſuch as are under a prejudice againſt worſhipping God by the uſe of our Engliſh Liturgy, that there is no ſuch difference as they fancy between the worſhipping God according to that, in conjunction with Pulpit Worſhip, and that way of Worſhip which they ſo much prefer before it, I ſhall offer this to their conſideration, *viz.* That there have as worthy men for Piety and Learning, both Conformiſts and Non-conformiſts, as perhaps ever *England* bred, lived and died in Communion in that Whorſhip which has been performed by our Engliſh Liturgy, from the beginning of the Reformation downward. And we may well conclude that their Souls would never have proſpered and flouriſhed ſo as no mens more, if there had been any ſuch difference as ſome men imagine between the way of their Communion and that of others. Men do not gather Grapes of thorns, nor Figs of

thiſtles. That the ſouls of many proſper no better under it, proceeds not from the nature of the proviſion for them, but from their own groſs neglect both of it, and of themſelves, who doubtleſs would be ſuch as they are, whatever the manner of Worſhip is in the places where they live.

3. If we have, in the place where the providence of God hath ſet us, means of worſhipping God publickly, competently uſeful and ſufficient to the ends of ſuch Worſhip, tho it ſhould in ſome reſpects be inferiour to ſome other; yet if we can have no better without breaking Order, and running into confuſion, nor without breaking one Commandment to obſerve another, nor without making our ſelves guilty of an unlawful ſeparation, and all the dreadful conſequences of it, we may be ſaid to worſhip God in the beſt manner we can, tho we content our ſelves with this, provided we be not wanting to improve it the beſt we can to its end. And the reaſon is, becauſe we then perform the beſt

beſt Worſhip we can that will conſiſt with edification, Publick Order, and the peace of the Church: and a Worſhip wherein all theſe concur, does beſt anſwer to general Rules for the manner of Publick Worſhip, taken together.

4. For men to ſeparate from Parochial Communion in the Worſhip performed according to the Liturgy, to the end God may be worſhipped by them after a better manner in ſeparate Aſſemblies, *is to do evil that good may come of it*; unleſs they can prove a neceſſity ſo to ſeparate or to ſin. For that to ſeparate without ſuch a neceſſity *is to do evil*, is a Proteſtant *Maxim* aſſented to on all hands among them. And that they are under no ſuch neceſſity as to ſin if they do not ſo ſeparate, I have ſhewed before, by ſhewing that the ſaid Worſhip is neither corrupt in the eſſence of it, nor is the external manner of performance of it deficient as to its end and uſe; one of which muſt be proved againſt it, before ſepa-

ration from it can be justified.

5. By such a separation as that we speak of, men really do much more disservice to God and the great concerns of Religion and the Souls of men, than they can with any colour of reason pretend that by worshipping God without the Liturgy, they honour him or Religion, or advantage the Souls of men. The effects of such a Separation are very visible which do too naturally flow from it; such as the destruction of Peace, Charity, and Humility, the engendering of Envy, Hatred, Strife, and Contention, to the great reproach of Religion, and dishonour of Almighty God, and the hurt of mens Souls, But how these great evils can be pretended to be counterballanced by their Worship being performed without the Liturgy, I understand not; but do take it to be a matter past doubt, that the benefit which those that separate get by their Communion without a Liturgy over and above what they might have gained by Communion where that is used,

will

will never equal the hurt they draw upon themſelves and others, and the wrong they do to Religion by their ſeparation: And if not, then when ever the account comes to be made up, and their loſs to be compared with their gain, they will be found exceeding great loſers by their ſeparation, notwithſtanding all the advantages they promiſed themſelves by it.

Thus far to ſhew that there is no juſt cauſe of ſeparating from Communion in the Worſhip performed by the Liturgy every Lords day. As for the geſture of kneeling in the act of receiving the Lords Supper; ſo much hath been written to prove it no ſin, and ſo little that looks like an Argument to prove the contrary, that if men of underſtanding would but lay aſide prejudice, and impartially compare and conſider what hath been ſaid on both ſides, I cannot think that after this, any could be long without ſatisfaction touching the lawfulneſs of complying with publick Order in that matter; eſpecially conſidering how

much is declared at the end of the Office for adminiſtration of the Lords Supper in the Liturgy, to clear that geſture in that action from all ſuſpicion of Bread-worſhip, more than in the Liturgy in uſe in the old Non-conformiſts days when they ſcrupled it.

But if any after they have done thus ſhall not for all that be ſatisfied, yet that can be no more an Argument to them than it was to the old Non-conformiſts, why they ſhould not hold Communion in the reſt of the Lords-day Worſhip as they did; and not only ſo, but preſſed it alſo on others as their duty to do ſo, and zealouſly inveyed againſt ſeparation from it as a great evil, as their Writings do abundantly ſhew. And that for ſuch to hold Communion with their Brethren ſo far as they can, is plain matter of duty, I have ſhewed before. And in caſe they ſhould thus hold Communion in the other parts of Worſhip, they need no more to live without the uſe of the Lords Supper than

than the old Non-conformiſts did, ſince I doubt not but they know how to be therein accommodated as well as they did, and as they were.

And ſo for Baptiſm, in caſe they cannot be active in the uſe of the Croſs *after it*, yet they may be paſſive, in as much as it is not uſed as any ſign of Gods conveying grace as Sacraments are, but only as a token of duty; nor as any Rite in Baptiſm neither, but only in receiving the Perſons baptized into the Church after they are baptized, and ſeems to be no more ground of ſcruple, than laying the hand upon, and kiſſing the Book in ſwearing is, which is a piece of Divine Worſhip, which none ſcruple but *Quakers*.

There are others who frame to themſelves other reaſons of ſeparation from Parochial Communion in Worſhip beſides its being performed by the Liturgy, as namely, becauſe thoſe Congregations are not as they pretend, conſtituted of viſible Saints, nor by a Church Covenant. Who theſe are

is well known, for whose sakes several of my former Inquiries are made: in which there are such things produced from the holy Scriptures as may, I suppose, be sufficient to satisfie their reason if not their prejudice touching their mistake in these opinions.

As for their exceptions against the Government of the Church by Bishops as *Diocesan*, how they would make Communion with the particular Congregations under their Jurisdiction unlawful upon that account, I understand not; unless they think the Ministers of those Congregations by whom the Ordinances are administred, to be no true Ministers, because Episcopally ordained, and not by Presbyters. And if this should be their scruple, they may easily receive satisfaction by considering that Diocesan Bishops were *Presbyters*. before they were Bishops, and therefore must needs remain so after. For they were not devested of any Ministerial power or authority by being made Bishops, but only invested

inveſted with a ſuperaddition of authority and power they had not before. So that they who are ordained by them, are ordained by a Presbyterial authority and more. And with this the old Nonconformiſts ſatisfied themſelves touching the validity of their Miniſterial authority received by Ordination from the Biſhops that then were.

Some again diſlike Parochial Communion, becauſe the Civil Power is ſo much concerned as it is in Eccleſiaſtical affairs relating to it one way or other, and for that all ſuch things are not left wholly to the ordering of Eccleſiaſtical Rulers, as they were in the Apoſtles times, and long after.

But there is not the ſame reaſon why they ſhould be ſo left now, as there was why they were ſo then. The reaſon why they were wholly left then to the ordering of an Eccleſiaſtical Power, was, becauſe there was no Civil Powers as *Chriſtian* then in being, ſo that they could not promote

promote Christianity better, any other way. But it is not so now: for it is shewed in our last former Inquiry but one, that the affairs of the Gospel and the Salvation of men in a Christian Kingdom or State, may better be provided for, and promoted by a national Constitution, than they can be without it. And that therefore things of this nature are not to be ordered as if we were still in a *Pagan* Kingdom when we are not.'

For where the reason of things is altered, it is but reasonable and fit that there should be a sutable alteration in the things themselves. Thus the gesture of standing with Loyns girt and a Staff in the hand, appointed to be used in eating the Passover at the first Institution of it, for that it was then to be eaten in *haste*, was afterwards altered to another gesture by the Church, when that Circumstance of eating in *haste* ceased; and our Saviour himself did eat it in that posture to which the Church had changed it, which is a consideration

of

of very great weight in reference to this and ſome other caſes. And the Obligation of the Ceremonial Law ceaſed upon the ſame ground when the ſubſtance was come which had been prefigured by Ceremonial Rites. And the like might be obſerved touching the diſcontinuance and diſuſe of anointing the ſick, waſhing Diſciples feet, and the kiſs of Charity, and ſome other things which were obliging until the reaſon of the Obligation ceaſed.

But altho the Civil Power doth concern it ſelf by a National Conſtitution to order and direct in things appertaining to the Church, for the promoting of Religion, and the Salvation of men, yet it does not this without the advice and aſſiſtance of thoſe that are Officers, and bear rule in the Church. And when the Civil Powers have gone as far as they think fit in ordering and directing by Eccleſiaſtical advice and aſſiſtance, yet they do not act any thing themſelves peculiar to the Miniſtry of the Church, but

but leave all ſuch things wholly to them who are inveſted with Miniſterial authority; reſerving only to themſelves a power of reſtraining ſuch men from an undue exerciſe of their Office tending to publick diſturbance.

And thus I have endeavoured to ſatisfie the *Diſſenters*, that there is no ſufficient reaſon or cauſe for them to ſeparate from the Publick Worſhip of our Parochial Aſſembles, and that their pretences for their doing ſo when narrowly looked into, are found to have nothing of ſubſtance in them ſufficient to bear them out in it, And if I am not miſtaken in my Allegations and reaſonings, I cannot diſcern how their ſeparation can poſſibly be defended from being an unlawful Schiſm. And if it be, I am ſure they have upon many accounts great reaſon to deſiſt from engaging farther in it.

QUERY

QUERY XV.

Suppoſing things touching viſible Church-Memberſhip and Communion to be as they have been repreſented in our former Inquiries; yet how do they tend to leſſen our Church Diviſions?

The anſwer to which is, That if the matters of our Inquiry be as they have been repreſented, then they tend to leſſen our Church-diviſions, by removing and taking away the very foundation on which they and our Church-ſeparations are in great part at leaſt built. For I do not know any one of the different Parties among the Proteſtant Diſſenters (except thoſe called *Presbyterian*) who do not found their ſeparation from our Pariſh Churches (at leaſt principally) upon this ſuppoſition that they are not *conſtituted according to the order of the Goſpel.* And why not according to the

the Order of the Goſpel, but becauſe as they ſay they are not conſtituted ol Goſpel matter, that is not of viſible Saints, but of ſuch as for a great part of them at leaſt, were never duly reputed to be regenerate, or to be of the Inviſible Church, and their meaning is (as I collect both from their Writings and Converſe) That they were not at firſt, nor ſince conſtituted of ſuch particular members only as at the time of ſuch their Conſtitution, had a probable appearance of Regeneration, but of all baptized perſons, however they proved good or bad, and without any other probation or diſcrimination.

Now if thoſe things be true which have been endeavoured to be proved to be ſo in the management of the former Enquiries; Then this ground on which they build their ſeparation, is altogether unſound, and ſuch as has no firmneſs or ſubſtance in it, but is only imaginary. For our Pariſh Congregations are conſtituted of perſons viſibly in Covenant with God the Father, Son,

Son, and Holy Ghoſt, by being baptized in their name, and thereby engaged to be theirs, to worſhip and ſerve the Father by the Son through the aſſiſtance of the Spirit. And of ſuch, and no other, were the Churches planted by the Apoſtles, conſtituted: And this Covenanting was then, and ſo is now, the viſible formal difference between thoſe of the Viſible Church and thoſe of the world: All under this Character and Badge, and none but they, were of the Viſible Church; and therefore it muſt needs be the Conſtitutive form of that Relation, Viſible Church-memberſhip, *All that have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt*, and are viſibly Chriſtians, and of Chriſts Church. How ancient and how long before Chriſts appearance in the world in our nature, this way of conſtituting Viſible Church-members has been by ſuch a Rite as God appointed, I have ſhewed before.

And if this viſible Covenanting with God by Baptiſm be that by which

which perſons become Members of the Viſible Church, then a probable appearance of Regeneration, or a reputation of being of the Church as inviſible cannot be it that makes them viſible Church Members, tho it does qualifie them for it, unleſs this probable appearance of Regeneration, and Covenanting with God by Baptiſm, be one and the ſame thing: And if they be, then thoſe of which our Pariſh Churches are conſtituted, have a probable appearance of Regeneration, or of being of the Inviſible Church, and then they are conſtituted of matter according to thoſe Diſſenters own mind: And if ſo, then we may well hope they will no longer ſeparate from them, as if they were not Conſtituted of qualified matter. So that things are brought at laſt to this iſſue, That theſe Diſſenters muſt either overthrow this Plea againſt the reaſon and ground of their Separation, and prove that viſible Covenanting with God by Baptiſm is not that by which Viſible Church-memberſhip is made,

or

or elſe it will certainly overthrow this Plea of theirs for their Separation. And if they will ſo much as attempt to overthrow this Plea againſt them; they muſt row all the way againſt the ſtream and ſtrong tide of the Scriptures, and againſt the ſtream of Antiquity, and the ſenſe of the ancient Church from the Apoſtles times downwards, who always eſteemed Baptiſm the *door of entrance* into the Viſible Church; and conſequently that all ſuch as had paſs'd through Baptiſm, were within the Church.

And as it is more agreable to Scripture, ſo it is much more reaſonable to ſay, that men cannot ſeem to be of the Church as Inviſibie, without being firſt of the Church as Viſible, than it is to ſay their being of the Church as Viſible, proceeds from their ſeeming to be of the Church as Inviſible. For as touching mens enterance into the Church by Baptiſm, our Saviour hath ſaid, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God,* Joh. 3. 5.

And Baptism is injoyned in order to the obtaining Remission of sin and Salvation, which are Priviledges of the Church as Invisible, *Acts* 2. 38. and 22. 16. *Mar.* 16. 16. So that according to these Scriptures, mens being and seeming to be of the Church as Invisible, and their sharing in the Priviledges of it, seems ordinarily to depend upon their being of the Visible Church by Baptism.

Now one would think a Notion so prepostrous as this opposed appears to be, should be very unfit to make a foundation to build Churches upon, or to justifie a separation from those which have a substantial foundation, the Scriptures I mean.

But if mens seeming in the apprehension of others to be of the Church as Invisible, did not depend upon their being of the Church Visible, yet such seeming could be no proper or fit Rule by which to judg, determine, and conclude who are, and who are not of the Visible Church. And the reason is, because it is *Arbitrarious*

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and uncertain: for mens being or not being acknowledged to be of the Viſible Church, would depend upon the uncertainty of mens opinions and affections: and thoſe would ſeem in ſome mens apprehenſions to be of the Church Inviſible, which to others would ſeem otherwiſe: And then thoſe would be owned by ſome to be of the Viſible Church, which would be denied to be ſo by others. Of the truth of all which this preſent Age hath furniſhed us with plentiful experience: And if this ſhould be the Rule obſerved through the whole Chriſtian world, it would be the ready way to make Parties and Sidings, unchriſtian oppoſitions, and uncharitable cenſurings among Chriſtians, in all parts of the world, as it has done here in this Nation.

Whereas to be viſibly in Covenant with God by Baptiſm, is a *certain, fixed, a common, open and publick Rule,* by which to judg who are of the Viſible Church, ſo long as they continue to own themſelves under the obligation

of that Covenant; and have neither so far violated it as to give Divine Worship to other Objects than their God, nor incurr'd to themselves Excommunication by Heresie, or other scandalous living. And this Rule gives no occasion of division in the Church as the other does, but tends to bind and hold the several Members together in *the unity of the Spirit and bond of peace:* To which purpose St. *Paul* urgeth it upon the Christians, motive-wise, *Eph.* 4.

All these things considered, one would wonder how men of Learning and Piety should ever be betrayed into such Notions and Principles, and to lay so mighty a stress on them as they have done, when yet they have no more colour from Scripture or reason than ever yet they have been able to produce for their defence.

But to make the best of it I can, we will suppose it was the appearance of a more thorow Reformation, and more pure Communion, which in their apprehension was to be obtained by these new Methods, that first drew

drew them into this way. Reformation and pure Communion, are things which ſound mighty well in good mens ears, and which they can eaſily believe to be well pleaſing unto God. And as there is an appearance of *greater ſtrictneſs* in that way than in that of more general Communion, ſo it was eaſie for them hereupon to think there *was more purity in it alſo*; which has been the prevailing reaſon which has carried multitudes into *Quakeriſm*. And when ſuch an opinion has once ſeated it ſelf in mens minds, they quickly grow confident that nothing in Scripture can be againſt it: and then they can eaſily fancy that every ſlight appearance and ſound of words in Scripture is for them, upon which they can but put ſuch a gloſs as ſhall favour them, though it be nothing to their purpoſe when impartially ſcann'd.

And had their opinions and practice which I have oppoſed, and wherein they differ from all other good men, been matter of purity indeed, I ſhould not

have made One to find fault with them. But if this their Way be disagreeable to Gods pure Word, (which is the Rule by which we must judg of what is pure, and what is impure) and if it run counter to our Lords Method laid down in the Scripture of ordering the affairs of his Church, in very material points, then it will be found an impure practice, a sinful mixture, and a corruption to be purged out of the Church: And yet such it is, if I have not misrepresented that Method of our Lord in the general tenour of my Inquiries. And indeed, if I have not taken wrong measures, and unless very much mistaken, their Communion in their state of Separation, if taken altogether, and the terms on which it is held, must needs be far more impure than the Parochial Communion they have withdrawn from.

There are extreams on both hands, as well on the right hand as on the left: and there is a pronenes in men to run into the one by flying from the other. And good men, especially in matters of

of publick Reformation, are through miſtaken zeal more in danger of running into an extreme on the right hand than into one on the left, and in flying from *Babylon*, to run beyond *Jeruſalem*. And there is a danger of doing much hurt in the Church by *over-doing* as well as there is by *under-doing*, and both extremes are carefully to be avoided.

The *New England* Miniſters in their Anſwer to Mr. *Davenport*, formerly mentioned, do ſay; *We may be very injurious to Chriſt as well as the Souls of men, by too much ſtraitening and narrowing the bounds of his Kingdom or Viſible Church here on earth. Certainly enlargement, ſo it be a regular enlargement, is a very deſirable thing. In Church Reformation it is an obſervable truth* (*ſaith* Pareus *on the Parable of the Tares*) *that they which are for too much ſtraitneſs do more hurt than profit the Church.* So much they, *p.* 45. Thus the miſtaken zeal of the *Donatiſts* and *Novatians* of old, for a purer Church, and purer Communion, as

was thought or pretended put them upon separating from other Orthodox Christians, which proved an inlet to the most unchristian practices imaginable, for the carrying on their undertaken Reformation, and destructive of the peace of the Church in the highest, and lamentably scandalous to the Christian Religion; in the Doctrinal part whereof notwithstanding they were for the most part all agreed, as we are now, and differ mostly about Disciplinary Points as they did then.

Such a strictness in Church Reformation as does so narrow and lessen the Visible Church, as to endeavour to reduce it to the size of the Invisible, is many ways hurtful, as I have shewed in my Reasons for the contrary. It tends to hinder and lessen the great work of thorow and sound Conversion in the Church: It tends to hinder the spreading and propagating of the Christian Religion: It tends to harden men in an unsafe condition: It tends to deprive *good* men of Com-

Communion with the Church, under the Notion of *bad:* It tends to ruine the Church as to its exiſtence in the world: And laſtly, it tends to beget and foment diviſions, contentions, feuds, envyings, ſtrifes, and undue cenſurings among Chriſtians, and ſo to caſt the Church into a ſickly ſtate, and ſuch as threatens her ſpiritual life: Beſides, the encouragement and advantage which is thereby given to our common Enemies to plot and attempt againſt us. And thus *over-doing*, is indeed *undoing*.

And leſt any ſhould be offended at a diſcourſe againſt over-much ſtrictneſs. It ought to be conſidered that there is a great difference between a mans being ſtrict towards himſelf, and in reference to his own practice, and his being ſtrict and ſevere towards others in depriving them of the outward Priviledges of Chriſtian Profeſſors. A man cannot well be too ſtrict in keeping a narrow watch over his own heart, words, and ways,

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in governing his Appetites, Thoughts and Passions, Tongue and Actions. Nor does this kind of strictness depend upon such a purity of Communicants or Communion in which no Carnal Christians have any share: But it depends upon, or rather it consists in a due attention of mens minds to their own duty, and to the opportunities of receiving good by the Ordinances of God.

The rest of the Guests in the Parable were not the worse, nor did fare the worse, for that there was one among them that had not on the Wedding Garment. The ordinances of God do not the less avail good men that with a due frame of mind wait upon God in them, tho unregenerate men participate with them therein.

And when by the Censures of the Church, Capital Offenders, and notorious scandalous Persons are deprived of Communion with the Church, it is not for that reason as if the Ordinances of God were the less useful

to

to the good by ſuch mens ſharing in them: But it is to bring ſuch Perſons to ſhame, and by that means to repentance, and to free the Church from that diſhonour which otherwiſe would ſtick upon it for tolerating ſuch ſcandalous perſons among them: And partly alſo for admonition to others, and to prevent the tainting of ſuch as are leſs wary by their ill example and familiar converſe. But otherwiſe bad mens ſharing in external Communion with the Church, is no ways likely to hinder the growth of good men in grace, or their profiting by the Ordinances of God there adminiſtred. *To the pure all things are pure:* Bad men cannot in the leaſt pollute the Ordinances of God to the good by their participating with them in them.

And therefore if God would have ſuch as are not obnoxious to Excommunication for Capital Crimes, tho not Regenerate, to be continued in the Church, being once received into it by Baptiſm, to the end they might be

be under the influence of his Ordinances for their Converſion: I ſay, if God would have it thus in order to their Converſion; no good man ſhould envy or grudge them this benefit of enjoying the means of ſuch Converſion. And they eſpecially ſhould not who have themſelves been Converted and Regenerated in the ſame way of general Communion, and by the means therein afforded; which yet has been the caſe, I doubt not, of ſuch as have been leading men in modelling this new Church way, as it has been of many others. For their Congregations at the firſt, and long after, conſiſted ſcarcely of any other than what had been drawn out of the Parochial Congregations where they had been Converted, if they were indeed Converted, as they ſuppoſed them to be, before their incorporating and aſſociating in their new way. And if they had continued in the ſame way wherein they were by Gods bleſſing upon the means of Grace they therein enjoyed, made ſuch as they then were;

were, they might without doubt have attained to as much growth in all Chriſtian Virtues as ever they did afterwards, and, I think, much more, provided they had but diligently and carefully improved the ſame means and opportunities by which they had acquired what they had then attained to.

For the Word and Ordinances of the Goſpel which are the means of increaſe of Grace as well as of the beginning of it, are the ſame, and will produce the ſame effects in thoſe who with a good frame of mind attend upon God in them, as well when unregenerate men ſhare in them as when they do not. And therefore neither the holy Prophets, or other holy men of greateſt Piety under the Old Teſtament, nor our Saviour or his Apoſtles, or any other holy men in the Primitive times of Chriſtianity, did ever decline the Publick Worſhip, or the uſe of Gods Ordinances in ſuch Aſſemblies where bad men, as well as good, had Communion in

in them. Such a mixture of bad with good cannot hinder good men from any growth in Grace by thoſe Ordinances, if they have but a due care to make the beſt improvement of them they can. And therefore there can be no *need* of ſeparating and new aſſociating in reference to mens own growth in Grace, tho we ſhould ſuppoſe it poſſible they could be ſure it were ſimply lawful. Which makes ſuch ſeparation on the one had, and aſſociating on the other, the more inexcuſable, when it cauſes ſo much hurt to the Church in general, and ſuch obſtruction to the ſucceſs of the Goſpel in the world, as hath been ſhewn it does, and would do more if it ſhould more generally prevail.

The *few names* in the Church of *Sardis* did not defile their Garments by communicating with the greater number of thoſe that had: Nor did they thereby deprive themſelves of the benefit which Chriſt deſigned them by his Ordinances, either by having their minds diſcompoſed by

ſuch

ſuch a mixture of Communicants, or otherwiſe: For if they had, we cannot think that our Saviour, who *walked in the midſt of his golden Candleſticks, ſearching the reins and the hearts to give to every one according to their works*, would have applauded them as he did, with promiſe of great reward, ſaying, *They ſhall walk with me in white, for they are worthy*, Rev, 3. 4.

And now for a Concluſion, That no man may take offence at the Diſcourſe in theſe Papers, nor at me for the ſake of it, I muſt inform thoſe that are moſt likely to do ſo, of two things:

Firſt, That if I had diſcerned that what is herein pleaded had had no better foundation than ſome few obſcure Texts of Scripture of dubious and uncertain Interpretation, I ſhould not thus far have engaged in it as I have done. But if it ſhall appear to others, as it does to me, that I have the general ſtream of the Scriptures on my ſide herein, both of the Old Teſtament and of the New, both as

as to matter of Doctrine, and matter of Fact; I hope I ſhall be excuſed for making this Eſſay for the ſatisfaction of thoſe that moſt need it.

Secondly, That I take the ſcope and deſign of the whole of the Diſcourſe in theſe Papers, to be perfectly agreeable to Chriſtian Charity, as tending to no mans hurt, but to the general good of all ſorts, elſe I ſhould not have been ſatisfied in it. For I know not how to think any thing Orthodox in Divinity, which is againſt Charity. Now if the extent of Viſible Church-Memberſhip and Communion pleaded for, tends more to the Converſion of ſuch of them as are unregenerate, and not otherwiſe obnoxious to Excommunication, than the excluding ſuch from both would do, then what I plead for is great Charity to them.

And this extent of Viſible Church-Memberſhip and Communion, tends to propagate and ſpread the Chriſtian Religion among thoſe that are yet without the Church more than the narrower

narrower way can do, as has been ſhewn, and therefore its matter of Charity to them alſo.

And in that this more general way of Viſible Church-Membership and Communion is not pleaded to the denying the uſefulneſs of Excommunication in reference to Capital Offenders, but the contrary, that's matter of Charity to them alſo: Becauſe by that they may be brought to ſhame, and ſo unto Repentance, when they ſee all ſober Chriſtians aſhamed to own them, or to be numbred with them, as being a diſgrace to the Religion they profeſs. And I am ſo far from being leſs for the exerciſe of Church-Diſcipline upon the proper Objects of it, than our Diſſenting Friends are, That I think it a piece of great uncharitableneſs towards groſs Sinners, when it is neglected by them to whom the exerciſe of it does belong. Only I would have the Scripture Rules obſerved in the exerciſe of it, and not to uſe ſuch ſeverity as to exclude all ſuch from Church-

Communion as may be suspected to be unregenerate, when yet not guilty of any Heresie, scandalous Crimes, or gross ignorance: For men may give occasion of suspicion of their unregeneracy by such sinful neglects of doing good, as yet may be no just ground of Excommunication.

Neither is this more extensive way of Visible Church-Membership and Communion, hurtful to those that are good, but gives them opportunity of doing the more good; and therefore is no matter of uncharitableness unto them neither. For this will not hinder them from being as good as they have a mind to be, if nothing else do. They may be as strict as they will in reference to themselves: And they will not be at the less, but the more liberty to converse with the best men for their own improvement in wisdom and goodness.

And then it will be beneficial to them by putting them into a capacity and giving them an opportunity of doing more good than otherwise they could. For while good men do not separate

ſeparate themſelves from formal Profeſſors of the ſame Religion, nor exclude them from Communion with them in the means of Grace; they the better preſerve their own eſteem among them, and the eſteem of that wherein they excel them; and they will be the more ready to hearken to them in their advice and counſel, and in their admonition or reproof, and the ſooner be brought to imitate their Virtues. Whereas a contrary carriage produces contrary effects. For ſeparation from Neighbours as no Members of a truly Chriſtian Church when yet they are ſo, breeds more or leſs eſtrangedneſs between them, and that begets prejudices againſt them, and jealouſies and ſuſpicions concerning them as men wanting in true Chriſtian Charity and Humility, which will make them the leſs valued, and their good Counſels and Exhortations the leſs regarded, and their good example in what is worthy imitation, the leſs taking with, and the leſs gaining upon ſuch men.

A Discourse likewise which evinceth a more extensive Visible Church-Membership and Communion to be approved of by God than these Dissenting Brethren will allow, must needs be matter of Charity to themselves more especially. For it tends to rescue and deliver them from such error as makes them injurious to the Church of God, and the affairs of the Gospel in the World. And what good man is there that would not be glad to be delivered from such apprehensions as made him troublesom even to good men themselves without any cause? And from such opinions as have kindled a fire of contention and discord in the Church, destructive of that Christian Charity without which all we do in Religion will signifie nothing. It is certainly a great grief to all good men that there should be any bar in the way to keep them at any undue distance from one another, and consequently it must be very grateful to them when ever it is removed.

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This more general way of Viſible Church-Membership and Communion, being then more uſeful and beneficial to all ſorts of men than the other is, and truly hurtful to none: I ſay, it being a way and Method ſo ful of Charity in the nature of it, and ſo agreeable to Moral Principles of wiſdom and goodneſs as it appears to be, would commend it ſelf to right reaſon, and to that natural light that is in men, if it ſhould not have had that evidence from ſupernatural Revelation to back and authorize it which it has. The conſideration of which, as it was a great motive to me to engage in the defence of it, ſo I hope it will plead my excuſe in every good mans Conſcience for this undertaking. For indeed, I that do certainly know my own mind, do know that I have more love and true reſpect for the Perſons whoſe Opinions I have herein oppoſed, than to wiſh or do any thing that tends to their hurt.

And

And now methinks I might reasonably promise this to my self, that such as love Truth for truth sake, and are of the number of those that will *buy the truth*, but not *sell it* at any rate whatsoever, should not be unwilling to lay aside all prejudice and self interest, and to consider impartially a thing of this nature by what hand soever it be prepared; and yet that is all that I desire from them for whose sakes this Discourse was composed.

THE END.

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